



FRANZ VON PAPEN

# FRANZ VON PAPEN

*His Life and Times*

*by*

H. W. BLOOD-RYAN

Not the talent, not the ability for one thing or another  
make the man of action; it is personality upon which  
everything depends.

GOETHE

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To that Service, ignored and unsung,  
often dangerous and always poorly-paid,  
whose vigilance warns and protects England  
against many things mentioned in this book.

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## FOREWORD

PARADOXICAL characters parade incessantly through German political history. Men of great worth, stirred by that most noble of all passions, love of country, reach for the stars and just grasping them—find that what they hold is only dust.

Franz von Papen, like many greater men who have striven to make Germany great, has failed to take the last hurdle in every event. He is the paradox of Catholic Germanism. He may be said to be the last Catholic politician ever to wield power and influence in German-speaking lands, and concomitant with his failure to hold the Chancellorship in 1932, and to keep alive Catholic action in the Cabinet of Hitler's Third Reich, the Catholic community (as such) lost for ever its political voice in the direction of all German affairs.

Events will prove that if German Catholicism be not content to worship only, instead of pursuing its age-long tradition and practice of shaping political destinies, it will disappear for ever as a faith in the new Germany, for it must be remembered that what is happening in that country is nothing new.

The Reformation of Martin Luther was more political than religious; in fact the *Ius Reformandi*, the right claimed by the Lutheran leaders, in their hierarchical capacity, to reform the Church, was certainly more political than theological, calling forth as it did just that same opposition from both Protestant and Catholic Churches as exists to-day in opposition to the Nazi attempt to mould the minds and souls of all Germans to their *Weltanschauung*.

Which brings me to the kernel of the whole situation of Catholic Germany.

Catholic Germany has ever been highly organized politically; Bismarck tried in vain to weaken its autonomy

in 1871-86 with his famous *Kulturkampf*, but failed. Until 1939 it has been a universal axiom that, politically, one could not attack the Catholic Church and succeed in vanquishing it. It has been thought proper that the State should give way to the wishes of the Church; but then Germany had no Henry VIII or Cromwell. Now, however, the Catholic Church has been informed that its function is the care of souls, not of statesmen.

In the past, with hypocritical thoroughness, political prudence and exigency whispered to Catholic prelates and politicians alike that they should appear to respect the wishes of the State, assisting to achieve a realization of its aims, the while opposing them. Pursuing this policy, political Catholicism in Germany became as obviously international as the Communist movement, which incidentally explains much of their affinity, causing the two movements to vote on similar measures in the Reichstags of 1919-32.

Franz von Papen's nature, as shown by his history, took readily to the conditions; had it not done so, his career would have been different—he would have remained an officer of Uhlans and a country squire of long lineage. It may be as well to say, here and now, that much which is discussed about German Catholicism is all so much humbug. Priests are in gaol or worse; but the same has happened in England in the past. The main point is that laws made by the State are for the observance of all the community, in which no one has a greater right than the other. If any person or collection of persons seek to upset the State, then they must expect punishment prescribed by that State until it has been overthrown and a new order substituted for it. Every revolutionary movement in its fighting days expects punishment. No thinking person has yet voiced the question: "Why do we hear more of Catholic priests in connection with offences and punishments in the Third Reich?" Should anyone do so, the answer is: "Because there was no real spiritual Catholic political party in Germany."

The Catholic Centre, true, could poll millions of votes; but in the main, those votes came from political fools or opportunists.

It is not enough that one is baptized in the Catholic or Protestant Church. That is a mere formality. How many believe in the Church yet profess its tenets? Few. So it was with the Centre Party in Germany. The voters "belonged" to the Party because they were baptized Catholics or had business interests with Catholics. Furthermore, many leaders of the Party, such as von Papen, for instance, were large employers of labour either directly or indirectly and the vote followed the pecuniary advantage. On the other hand, many Catholics were active voting members of the National Socialist Party or other lesser Parties.

The point is that with the accession of National Socialism to power in Germany, the bulk of the Centre Party saw very readily on which side its bread was buttered and, following the example of von Papen, was swallowed up in the Nazi machine. Consequently the clerical remnants of the German Centre remained fairly solid against the Hitler regime and assumed, collectively, the passive role of liberators, at the same time smuggling as much currency and valuables out of Germany as was possible under the vigilance of the special frontier *Devisen Überwachung* (Exchange Control), and often performing the tricks made famous by Baroness Orczy's *Scarlet Pimpernel*, usually in conjunction with some idealistic Englishman, or money-making foreigner of any nationality.

The stirring up of the people in a Jihad against the Third Reich (which one was led to expect from various manifestos) has apparently been well thought over and rejected as too dangerous, physically, for the would-be instigators. The days of the Christian martyrs are gone in Germany.

Yet Benito Mussolini wrote on 18 December 1934, in the *Figaro* :—

"A fight against religion is a fight against the impalpable—against the intangible; it is open warfare against the spirit in its most profound and most significant force, and it is by this time fully proved that the weapons at the disposal of the State, no matter how sharp they may be, are powerless to inflict any mortal blows on the Church, which—and by the Church I mean especially the Catholic Church—emerges invariably triumphant after engaging in the most bitter

conflicts. When a nation goes to war, for example, it finds itself face to face with a concrete material entity, an entity capable of being attacked, shattered, mutilated and transformed; but when instead of such a material entity, the adversary is a religion, it is impossible to take a definite and precise aim at any target. There passive resistance on the part of the priests and of the faithful is sufficient to frustrate the most violent attack by a State."

Perhaps Signor Mussolini writes from experience, but there is nothing in events in Germany to indicate that his postulations have any substance in fact, in regard to German Catholicism.

Writing with a profound belief in an all-pervading Deity, but unencumbered by any particular allegiance to a religious sect controlled by man-made laws, I can safely state that unless a miracle is vouchsafed in Germany, the political power of the Catholic Church is broken into shreds, the strands of which can never be knitted together.

The instrument responsible for this state of affairs is none other than the very Concordat arranged and signed by von Papen in the Chancellery of the Vatican on 20 July 1933. The Vatican signed through its Secretary of State, Cardinal Pacelli, one-time Nuncio in Berlin and presently the head of the Roman Catholic Church.

German affairs are the most bewildering of those of any nation. About them no two opinions seem to agree. The German scene becomes more chameleon-like as the years pass, and for the German people there is no middle course. It is presented with two possible destinies—greatness or oblivion; and it surely cannot be that this nation has survived the past twenty-five years only to succumb to the latter fate. The astute and scholarly Brüning, its one-time leader, surrendered the Centre Party of Germany when it had opportunity, and the cleric-politician Kaas refused collaboration and the Chancellorship when offered it by the venerable Paul von Hindenburg. Franz von Papen accepted it at the instance of the Christian-Socialist General, Kurt von Schleicher, and either sold the pass or went under through political inexperience, inanition or the blind following of a dream, which others have called an idea.

Why did political Catholicism in Germany, then led by von Papen, apparently commit suicide, when he had the ear of Hindenburg, his friend and President, and when he was possessed of all those advantages lacked by Adolf Hitler—money and access to money, culture and power, the support of the Army class and (apparently) countless friends among the great bankers, industrialists and East Elbian land-owners, coupled with the feudal-like support of the Catholic peasantry? In spite of all this he could not rely upon the support of one in ten of the electorate (let alone the population) for himself and his Party at the poll.

The answer lies in von Papen's own ideas, which follow in these pages.

In early 1933 the following official announcement was made by the body corporate of Catholic action and thought in Germany, then led by von Papen:

"We German Catholics will stand, with all our soul and our full convictions, behind Adolf Hitler and his Government. We wonder at his love for fatherland, his energy and his statesmanly wisdom. We are proud that under his regime Germany has become the first State to be built-up on the basis of the main idea behind the *quadragesimo anno*. German Catholicism must put away negation and come out of the Ghetto; it must take an active part in the building-up of the Third Reich, for only through untiring devotion to the great work will we too have the right to ask for what, to us of Catholic thought, seems indispensable (*apparently referring to a wider recognition of Catholic freedom: Author*); for on our shoulders too rests the responsibility for the future of Germany and the Christian culture of the Western world."

The history of the past six years discloses none of that collaboration. Did organized Catholicism, just as it suffered from self-deception, seek to pursue a policy which, to say the least, was Jesuitical and hypocritical or were its good intentions thwarted by the underground activities of its standard-bearer?

The passing of Pope Pius XI rendered more difficult the position of German Catholics and it is obvious that the Berlin-Rome axis, operating as it does in concerted anti-clerical fashion, will do much to curtail further the



temporal power of the newly-elected occupant of the Vatican. During the Papal elections we read inspired editorials in the Italian Government-controlled Press that Cardinal So-and-So was not suited for the Holy Office and at least six Cardinals were suggested as *persona non grata* to Mussolini on the unusual grounds of their non-Italian nationality.

With a weak Pope, afraid of the assumption of temporal responsibility, it is possible to visualize a complete collapse of German Catholicism, harassed from within and with little or no prospect of moral support from the head of the Church on Earth, which if present would cause the Catholic forces throughout Christendom to rally to its aid. It is felt that the twentieth century offers no prospect of success for a religious crusade, and therefore it appears as if the German Catholics will be left to work out their own salvation—which would seem to place them in a position similar to that in which the Jews now find themselves.

It will be already gathered that I am not a Catholic, but I am viewing the political implications involved in the foregoing hypothesis.

Revolutions can never be static; the revolutionary leaders must go on or go under. In 1933 von Papen spoke of the National Revolution—so did Hitler. Both had as their objectives two entirely opposite revolutions—two entirely opposite Germanies. Papen looked for something like a twentieth-century Holy Roman Empire (Western Catholic German Reich) in which aristocracy of birth, as ever with him, was to play the leading part, while Hitler saw a new Germany of opportunities, of military force, of greater economic standing—expanding, expanding and ever expanding. He saw himself as a Bismarck with powers infinitely greater than those wielded by the Iron Chancellor who gave Germany her colonies and her Navy—but without an Emperor. Whereas, Papen, with his Catholic upbringing, looked for an Emperor and in fact was lost without one. Papen saw in the Hitler movement a means to an end, a broad back over which he could climb. Hitler saw in the solid support which Papen brought to his banner the end of his fifteen years' striving for power.

The inclusion of Papen as Vice-Chancellor in the new Government of "National Concentration" (so ably phrased by Hindenburg) of the Third Reich and the negotiation by him with the Pope of the Concordat between the Vatican and Germany, lulled the body Catholic in Germany into a sense of false security—for after all, Hitler professed to be a son of Holy Church—and once they had given Hitler their mandates to rule without reference to the elected Reichstag, the new Master of Germany announced his orders:

"No interference by politically minded clerics in the affairs of the Government of the Reich."

There can be no doubt that the National Socialist movement is gradually approaching a new phase. The Catholics, Conservatives, wealthy land-owning classes and industrialists, who helped Hitler to assume power through Papen and Hugenberg, are deeply disappointed and disillusioned at the turn of events in Gross-Deutschland. They, led by Papen (in 1932 particularly) had hoped to influence and guide the Nazi leaders along lines that they themselves had chosen—the restoration of Junker influence and the privilege of the gentry, military prestige and industrial hegemony. But they, again led by Papen (thinking as he did of a national revolution different from the Nazi revolution) confused the concept of the new order and found themselves in bondage to a thing wholly alien to their upbringing, their interests and their mentality.

The Junkers and lesser nobility found themselves servants to Hitler and to Hitler's Reich—not even accepted by him as equals, and the industrialists found that Hitler's concept of the State differed from their own. They thought to make the State work for them, and in the fondness of their imagination they saw huge profits rolling in from the heavy rearmament and public works programme; but Hitler restricted their profits to 6 per cent on capital and mobilized their hidden financial reserves in a manner after the press gang. To their capitalist and bourgeois mentality, despite the "National Awakening", this was financial Bolshevism.

They hope, vainly in my opinion, that the revolutionary period in Germany will pass—they are not yet fully persuaded of the victory of National Socialism over the deluded rank and file of the Conservative and Catholic forces. But the surrender of Church and Conservatism was so absolute in 1933 that no earthly power could now, after six years of the Third Reich, resuscitate their glory and influence.

No one can deny Franz von Papen his charm of manner and conversational brilliance. He is an exceptional and striking personality. He is no sycophant or weakling; his military career, while not greatly outstanding, is at least comparable with that of any officer.

He combines great amiability, adroitness and strength of character with the charm of the most graceful causeur that I have ever met and at first one receives the impression that here is a man above the atmosphere of his surroundings. Then suddenly there come moments when all faith in him is lost—dashed to the ground like a broken tea-cup.

In early 1933 I often thought that he stood above the ruck of common things—in appearance he was so elegant, suave and never ruffled. I could not fail to admire—although it shook my confidence and my belief in his strength of character—the magnificent and almost unbelievable skill with which he would, practically imperceptibly, shift his cards when he had expressed an opinion contrary to the other or others and tack round to the other point of view, without losing face.

To see Herr von Papen walk out of the Home Office or the Foreign Office in Whitehall would not seem at all out of place, for he is the nearest approach in appearance, dress and manner, of any Continental statesman to an English Minister.

In personal conversation or in the atmosphere of the Reichstag, I found him most convincing, for his confidential manner is most impressive, but he lacks the force and public appeal of men like Hitler, Göring or Goebbels, all of whom have become more at home with huge masses.

Many see a hope in von Papen's apparent return to grace, exemplified in his new extra-Ministerial perambulations in Scandinavia as a preacher of the Nazi gospel,

his mission to Turkey, and his secret negotiations with Moscow to offset the efforts of the British and French delegations; but, as before, he will be repudiated by the ruthless ruler of Germany's destinies once his utility has ceased. Franz von Papen was, or perhaps is, the last standard-bearer of Catholic politics in German-speaking lands and a study of his history will go far to unravelling the causes of the rupture between the body Catholic, both spiritual and temporal, and the new Germany.

June 1939.

H. W. BLOOD-RYAN.

This foreword and most of the pages of this book were planned and written in the early summer. Before publication became possible, the face of Europe was changed, and it is no exaggeration to say that the scheming and intrigue of Franz von Papen has done as much to bring about that change and the war which is now upon us, as the lies and chicanery of Adolf Hitler. Without the pact with Russia, conceived by von Papen, Hitler would not have been emboldened to throw down the gage. Franz von Papen has remained, through all these intervening years, what he was in 1914.

September 1939.

H. W. BLOOD-RYAN.

# FRANZ VON PAPEN

## CHAPTER I

THE traveller in Westphalia, when leaving behind him the tall smoke-stacks of factories and the flaming coke-ovens of Dortmund and Hamm, if he wishes to travel eastwards must pass along the Hellweg—the old original roadway of the Ruhr. Soon a peaceful scene meets his gaze—green meadows and red heathland, gigantic oaks and hedgerows form themselves into high colourful walls, through which, here and there, he is allowed a glimpse of some small farmstead nestling down in the undulating land—while, completing the picture, a plough or farm cart comes into view only to disappear over the brow of some low hill. The whole land is steeped in history and its soil has been fertilized through the centuries with the blood and bone of many a doughty warrior.

Continuing eastward, the traveller finds himself in Soest, the one-time capital of Westphalia, rich in religious and political history and now an important, but not large, junction of the railway from Aachen to Berlin and Hamburg.

Three hours distant by road is Werl, a little town of nearly 9,000 souls, which, with its Franciscan church, Franciscan monastery and Ursuline convent, has become a place of pilgrimage, famous throughout Westphalia.

In the shadow of this monastery, accompanied by the echoing pealing of bells, Franz von Papen made his first acquaintance with this troubled world as a squawling babe, on 29 October 1879.

The new German Empire, proudly led by Prussia, was just then puffed up with pride over its victory gained over the traditional foe of a thousand years standing, in the Franco-Prussian war, and it was clamouring; under Bismarck, for a place in the sun. A few years later, when

young Franz was lisping his alphabet, the Colonial Society was formed in Frankfort and thenceforward the German stage was being set, upon whose creaking boards he was to perform his variety of acts.

The von Papen family are hereditary Salters of Werl and Neuwerk<sup>1</sup> and are the owners of the salt mines which, from time immemorial, have provided employment, albeit hazardous and poorly remunerated, in the district of Soest; as Salt Junkers their title goes back to Charlemagne. Confirmation of the title was first committed to document form in 1298; *Albertus dictus Papa et Hermanus filius eius, Sälzer zu Werl*, ran the document, thus disclosing the original family name as Papa.

From the fifteenth century onwards the family blossomed out into something more than mere country squires. They were reckoned among the Westphalian nobility. On 1 December 1485, Wilhelm Pape, then an esquire and candidate for knighthood, was given the knightly estate of Koeningen<sup>2</sup> by Count Claudius von Tecklenburg, by deed, and it remains to-day in the possession of the von Papen family.

For several centuries, in common with other German semi-noble families, the Papen family waxed rich in worldly goods, by industriousness ably assisted by fortunate marriages. Their eyes were turned towards Vienna, where the fount of all German sovereign power and nobility resided, to the Emperor, to the head of that Empire called Holy, upon which the twilight was rapidly gathering.

Fulfilment of all Papen ambition came on 15 April 1708, when a decree promulgated in Vienna by the Emperor, ennobled the whole Papen family for all time. The family received the knightly and noble title of the Reich and all members could now use the noble prefix of *von*. At the same time their armorial bearings were confirmed, thus making the von Papen family one of the oldest titled families in Germany in 1939.

Friederich Franz Michael von Papen, the father of Franz von Papen, was also born in Werl, on 18 December

<sup>1</sup> Erbsälzer von Werl und Neuwerk.

<sup>2</sup> Rittergut von Koeningen.

1839, and at the time of the younger Franz's birth was squire of Koenigen, Salt Colonel<sup>1</sup> and an officer in the Prussian Army.

He retired from active service into the reserve as a first Lieutenant (*Ober Leutnant*), in order to take over the administration of the family estates. On 17 September 1872, he married at Düsseldorf Anna Laura von Steffens, who was born at Neuss on 26 April 1852. From this marriage sprang five children, Franz being the third.

For several centuries the von Papen family had given many scientists, economists and clerics to Germany and became renowned as world travellers. Soldiering did not appeal over-much and it was not until Franz's father entered the 5th Westphalian Uhlan regiment that this lack of interest in the national life was remedied. The elder von Papen served in the wars of 1866 and 1870-71 and his experiences doubtless wakened in the son a desire to become a soldier.

As a boy Franz von Papen, in common with German youth of the period, evinced a great interest in history and military matters. Otherwise his childhood was normal—madcap games like all boys, and strict physical training, accounting for his athletic figure at his present age of sixty. Born of strict parents, themselves stern and unrelenting Catholics, it is not surprising that he developed at an early age very distinct views on the relation of Church and State, and from his early days there has grown, year by year, a definite outlook on Rome, finally culminating in his "idea", which he expounded in later years.

The rights and duties of the aristocrat are as much part of his religion as the confessional. He was drilled, day after day, in the ways of the German *aristo* and he has become rather self-conscious of his tradition, until now he inclines to lean upon the aristocratic principle as a prop to support his remaining years.

He expressed himself quite clearly on this point in an address to German students on 21 February 1933:—

<sup>1</sup> The Salt Mines in Germany were somewhat similar in standing to the Stannaries of Cornwall and Devon. Consequently a Salt Colonel (*Salz Oberst*) was analogous in authority to a Lord Warden of the Stannaries.

"There is no culture, there is no State, no self-assertion, in fact nothing God-like in the human being, without the aristocratic principle. As the deciding criterion of the noble human being, it appears to me that there should be something beyond mere usefulness, whether biological or economic, in our lives. Nobility is the spiritual obligation to live as models to the rest of the world, which is the only way to live. The eternal goal for which to strive is to be like God and the main point in the life of the noble human being. We must become accustomed to look up to the human being who has become somebody of importance through his brain and character—who seeks to be true and faithful, who is a gentleman because he has learned, and understands how, to serve—who does not speak about himself and what he can do, because such are firmly established in themselves; who do not manifest, but radiate dignity!"

After these words, von Papen pointed to the Reichs-President von Hindenburg as the living example of the aristocratic principle and held him up as a model of nobility.

Like many members of the German upper class, Franz von Papen did not receive too liberal an academic education. Apart from his early schooling obtained from private instruction, he attended the local school and later the *Rektorat* school in Werl, entering the Royal Prussian Cadet Corps in 1891. For those who were about to enter the German Imperial Army, too much liberality in education was not encouraged. The youngsters had to learn discipline and their jobs, rather than to cram dead languages and the calculus. As it was, the standard of education obtainable at a *Rektorat Schule* was in those days comparable with that to be found in any of the older English public schools.

Between 1891 and 1895 he attended the Cadet Academy at Bensberg, leaving to undergo senior instruction courses at the senior Military Academy at Lichterfelde, in Berlin, where he remained until 1898. He distinguished himself throughout his military training and in his last year at Lichterfelde he belonged to the *Selecta*, a body of cadets who had achieved special merit and who, after passing their *Einjährige* examination, were posted as subalterns six months earlier than the ordinary pass cadets.



This marked the beginning of Franz von Papen's career and it brought with it the jealousies of those who said that he had been born "with a silver spoon in his mouth"; it encouraged those who, later in his life, whispered that his family and personal dandified air ingratiated him with those who could dispense preferences. Money could do a lot in post-war Imperial Germany, but the Army looked for brilliance, and von Papen's life will show that his main fault is over-brilliance. Broad canvases attract him and he has no time for detail.

Being country-bred, his natural inclination was to seek a commission in the Cavalry, and on 15 March 1898 he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the 5th Westphalian Uhlán regiment (his father's old regiment) and was stationed in Düsseldorf, in the middle of that smoky country from which his family drew its income—the black country of Western Germany.

From thence onward he enjoyed a military training and experience of infinite variety, and he threw himself into the social life which was so much a part of an officer's life in the old Imperial Germany. Being well supplied with this world's goods, he was able to enjoy life to the full, while at the same time preparing for the future, the nature of which was, without doubt, still somewhat vague to the young officer of Uhláns. His perfect manners, natural charm, fine figure and ability on the ball-room floor made him the target of many designing mothers anxious to make, as was so common in those almost forgotten prosperous and blissful days before the war, a good match for one or other of their daughters.

Franz von Papen was a good judge of horse-flesh and had a perfect seat in the saddle, achieving, apart from military equestrian events, quite a reputation as a gentleman jockey and a rider over the sticks. In those days racing was far more popular in Germany than at present, English trainers and jockeys enjoying great vogue and preponderating on the most important race-courses.

On 1 March 1901 Second-Lieutenant Franz von Papen was seconded for duty to the Military Gymnastic Institute and remained there until July of the same year. He

returned to the 5th Westphalian Uhlan regiment and served as a regimental officer until 1 October 1902, on which date he was attached to the Military Riding School.

. . . . .

While von Papen was immersed in his soldiering, England and Germany were drifting farther apart. The popularity of Great Britain in Europe had not increased as a result of the South-African war, and England particularly was still smarting under the Kaiser's attitude to President Kruger. The majority of statesmen in Europe sensed trouble in England's continual postponement of her promised evacuation of Egypt. England claimed that it was unsafe to leave the Egyptians to self-government, which she was teaching them, while bringing added prosperity to the *fellaheen*. But Germany saw in England's action a sinister motive of conquest and the French had become annoyed with England over the rather arbitrary attitude adopted to the Republic's claims in North Africa. France became embittered at what she considered to be British aggression.

When, after the Peace of Vereeniging in May 1902, England poured money into South Africa for the reinstatement of the farmsteads which had been subject to military occupation and damage during the Boer war, instead of demanding indemnities, Europe again saw something sinister in English policy. For it did not seem that Albion would lavish treasure as well as the flower of her youth on the surly and truculent Boer.

Europe became a seething pot of suspicion and commercial competition. The Kaiser's reference to the Huns when bidding farewell to the German troops who were off to China to fight during the Boxer rebellion, caused annoyance to English minds; and so the merry strife went on, not yet open, but with incident in plenty to cause friction and a resultant general conflagration.

New factors began to influence European relations. For fifty years Britain had pursued a policy of free trade, but now a new policy was vigorously pushed forward, and in many quarters enthusiastically adopted, but this brought

in its train a political effect which was not anticipated, nor indeed envisaged. This new economic policy was visualized in Germany as being malevolently directed against German commercial expansion and was definitely heralded in the Reich as a British attempt to lock Germany up in her own territory. Then followed that rather awkward moment, when a famous British publicist wrote in a sober journal words to the effect that if every German disappeared, England would be much better off. The written word, as many find to their danger, has a singular and irritating habit of cropping up when least expected, and this particular publicist's work has been unearthed and republished by the German official Press in 1939, as concrete evidence of England's traditional policy of seeking, as the words imply, to destroy Germany. It is not enough that the gentleman in question, some years after the original publication of the article complained of, visited Germany openly under his own name and was joyously welcomed as a friend of Germany—indeed a *Weisser Rabe*.

But this conception of commercial encirclement remained unaffected by the defeat of the Tariff Reformers in 1906, and the conviction, once established, remained in the popular mind that every Englishman was saturated with jealousy of the commercial progress of Germany. Moreover, just at the moment when this propaganda was in full swing, France and Great Britain discovered that no difference between them was incapable of reasonable and peaceable adjustment, and the visit of King Edward VII to France gave an impetus to that new spirit of friendliness which was rapidly growing between the two countries facing each other across the English Channel.

This visit, considered in conjunction with the supposed anti-German Tariff suggestions, and the *Entente Cordiale* which followed, seemed doubly ominous to Germany, and as can be imagined, the firm belief in the sinister designs of Britain took permanent root, in a ground already well watered by Queen Victoria's open dislike of the Emperor Wilhelm II. In all fairness to German public opinion, however, it must be borne in mind that the position of the Crown in England is not properly understood in other

countries—they were not to know the limits imposed on the Monarch—and consequently it did not become very difficult to imagine the most Machievellian designs at work. Matters did not end there.

France and Russia were becoming friendly and the community of interests between France and England developed into a tripartite understanding, thus destroying the fundamental policy of Bismarck, which was to keep these three Powers well away from each other.

Thus the encirclement complex of pre-1914 Germany took shape. The vultures were gathering to pick the hemmed-in German eagle; or so those responsible for German policy thought, because to their minds the three Powers had nothing in common and much of difference. Therefore, only one motive could possibly actuate their conciliation—the desire, common to the three, to destroy Germany.

By the time Franz von Papen was suited to become an efficient officer of the Reich, the development of this idea had become a fundamental factor in the complicated and distressing story of the immediate pre-war years, having a catastrophic climax in 1914.

Convinced of the enmity of the leading European Powers, Germany settled down not to accept, but to fight the inevitable, and consequently there was keen competition among the officer class to become efficient for the "day".

New methods of warfare were visualized and adopted. A spate of military and semi-military works poured from the German printing presses and each one disclosed that Germany, far from accepting English domination, was prepared to contest it and not only take her place in the sun, but England's also. There were plenty of well-intended persons, as now in 1939, who sought to bring about understanding and conciliation, but again, as now, their voices went unheeded and Germany persisted in an "all or nothing" policy.

While still on active service with his regiment, Franz von Papen married Martha von Boch, the daughter of

Privy Councillor von Boch-Galhau, of the great industrial business of Villeroy and Boch in the Saar. Like many men with charm, ability and money, he married more money, receiving at the same time a wealth of relations and connections among the great industrialists and the aristocracy of France, Belgium and Luxemburg.

This marriage had much to do with von Papen's later ideas and the influence he was able, in post-war years, to bring on conferences with the ex-Allied Powers on reparations, particularly at the Lausanne Conference. Like his father, Franz von Papen has also five children from his marriage, one son, Friedrich Franz, and four daughters. The new interests and contacts which came to him broadened his outlook and he seemed to cease to be just a German. He became a European and much of his post-war work bears distinct mark of internationalism, in the achievement of which, of course, he was assisted by his position in the laity of the Roman Catholic Church. But it was short-lived.

From 26 July 1904 until 30 September 1907, he carried out the duties of a regimental adjutant, becoming in 1908 Oberleutnant (senior lieutenant)—equivalent in executive standing to a Captain in the British Army. The years 1907 to 1913 were those which proved of greatest influence on von Papen's military life. From 1 October 1907 until 21 July 1910 he was attached to the War Academy in Berlin, and was then appointed to the Imperial General Staff for a year from the 20 March 1911.

At the early age of thirty-three he was advanced to the rank of Captain additional to establishment, remaining for yet another year on the Staff. During these years many factors influenced the young Staff officer's life, but none proved so great as acquaintance with General Friedrich von Bernhardi, who, incidentally, sprang into world prominence in 1911, owing to the publication of his book *Germany and the Next War*, which was translated into every important language. Von Papen's consequent conduct was directed by contact with von Bernhardi, his theories, and, as the Germans say, his *Weltanschauung*. It is, therefore, at this juncture, not inappropriate to learn something of

this literary General, whose military ability in the field, as proved by history, was not equal to the standard of his pamphleteering.

Friedrich von Bernhardi was born at St. Petersburg on 22 November 1849, while his father, Theodor von Bernhardi, was attached to the German Embassy. He was educated at Gymnasiums in Berlin and at Hirschberg in Silesia. Entering the German Army in 1869, he participated in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71. From 1891 until 1894 he was Military Attaché at Berne, and for the next three years he was a lecturer on military history in various German Military Academies. In 1907 he was given an Army Corps, but he retired from active military service in 1909. He returned to the Army at the outbreak of the World War in 1914, serving first in the eastern theatre of war and later on the Western Front.

At the close of the last century, von Bernhardi was known in military circles only as a General of a studious nature and as a writer on the technical aspects of warfare. In 1911 he startled Germany and the world with the frankness and deadly earnestness of his book *Germany and the Next War*, which immediately ran through a large number of editions and which was translated by Mr. A. H. Powles (Edward Arnold) into English the same year, ultimately running into many editions, including a cheap paper-covered edition in 1914.

He was a disciple of Treitschke and popularized the ideas of his master. The time of his literary outburst was significant. The embroilment with the French over Morocco had given the military men in Germany every reason to hope that the long-awaited "day" had come. It was, however, settled in humane and civilized fashion and the indignant General poured out his scorn on the civilians of Germany, who had thus preferred the peace and prosperity of their homes to the expansion of their country by war.

Borrowing a little from the newer prophet Nietzsche, he was able to improve upon the older master, and to show how struggle and the triumph of the stronger was a law of life itself, millions of years older than the demoralizing

dreams of the pipe-of-peace smokers. Like Nietzsche, and, indeed, many other so-called philosophers, he misunderstood Darwinism, and thought that civilization could make progress only by warfare.

Then followed significant and fatal miscalculations of Britain, Russia and, worst of all, of the Naval situation. The British Fleet would, of course, be so superior that it would drive the German warships under the shelter of the forts and blockade Germany, but Germany would be in a position to raid British commerce disastrously and would obtain adequate supplies through Denmark and Scandinavian countries. Belgium would be part of the theatre of war, and he sneered at its "paper bulwark" of neutrality, and thus gave a useful phrase which the German Chancellor employed in August 1914. In fine, he scorned the type of diplomacy which would conceal this aggressive enterprise under pretext that Germany was merely defending herself against jealous rivals.

The great war, he said, must be brought about by Germany. She must foment trouble in the overseas possessions of the rival Powers, and march out with her drilled forces to world power or downfall.

Therefore, the first duty of every citizen is to the State. That has a familiar ring in this year of grace 1939 and so has: "As war is not only an integral part of humanity, but the great civilizing influence of the world, it is the duty of every State and of every citizen of every State to be prepared for war. England is stationary or even retrogressive in the world's progress. Germany is the coming world power, who, by her rise, will elevate the world standard of civilization, art, and commerce. Germany is, in fact, civilization's greatest asset. Germany's inevitable expansion is being jealously guarded and watched by France and England, who are determined to thwart it by all and every means."

Therefore, von Bernhardt contended, it is the duty of Germany to utilize all and every means to protect her legitimate interests, and in this world, if might is not right, it is so alike as to be hardly distinguishable from it.

That was the cynical frankness of von Bernhardi and it became the gospel of von Papen and many other German officers, who saw only their duty to the fatherland.

. . . . .

The post-Bismarck Germany became annoyed with England, which would not recognize the power and greatness of the German race. That is how it seemed. And so, from that mere longing for recognition and show of cousinliness, the feeling grew to a determination to show the English that not only were they equal in standing but greater.

Germany was a young country and to youth, the future. Pursuance of this policy suited the German capitalists and industrialists and they both thought nothing of footing the bill. What was that compared to Germany's *Welt-politik*? The most fantastic and expensive plans were laid by the pre-1914 rulers of Germany and when Captain Franz von Papen, still a member of the Imperial German Staff, was appointed, on 13 January 1914, Military Attaché at the German Embassy in Washington, and serving also in the same capacity in the German Legation in Mexico, he took with him the idea of von Bernhardi, that anything is right when one, through its use, serves one's country against the rest of the world.



## CHAPTER II

IN early 1914 it became all too apparent that the Kaiser and his immediate entourage were aiming at world domination. Austria provided the excuse for war. The Balkan war, which came to a close with Bulgaria accepting the terms of the Treaty of Bucharest in August 1913, under which she ceded territory to Rumania, Serbia, Greece, and Turkey, was not at all in keeping with the designs of the Kaiser, nor for that matter was it to the taste of Austria.

This result meant a stronger Serbia, still barred, it is true, from the Aegean and Adriatic, and Austria attempted a strangulation by economic pressure on the Serbs, made possible by their lack of seaboard. Serbia had been deprived of Monastir, which she had captured and on the possession of which she, Greece and Bulgaria were all determined. So Austria thought that Monastir would continue as a bone of contention sufficiently interesting to keep alive the mutual suspicions and jealousies of all the Balkan States, which would be to Austria's advantage, determined as she was to force her way down to the Aegean, which way would remain blocked to her as long as the smaller countries remained even superficially united.

Bulgaria and Greece could possibly have been won over to Austrian aims, by the giving of some concessions here or there, naturally at the expense of Serbia, but little Serbia was the predominant obstacle and was the external focus of all Slavonic sentiment, which, incidentally, was to prove the most disintegrating influence with the heterogeneous Dual Monarchy.

The motives which actuate Governments and those which move their peoples in moments of crisis are not necessarily the same, more particularly so in those countries where the Governments do not directly derive their authority

from the people. The peoples may be unconscious of, and indifferent to, this difference, but, nevertheless, it exists.

This failure of a nation's people to understand the motives of its rulers, accounts for the unrelenting attitude of millions of Germans, who, in face of all evidence, will not believe that the madmen ruling the Germanic States in 1914, provoked war. Naturally, this charge is not made against the mass of the German people, whose kindness and hospitality is known to all who have come in contact with them. When a nation is lied to by its rulers, mass actions must be excusable, but for those who execute cold-blooded dastardly acts in the knowledge that they are part of a general plan, there can be no relief from blame.

Therefore, small wonder is it that when the Austro-German peoples were told that England, France and Russia were working for the overthrow of the Central Powers, the tale was readily believed and to them the Kaiser's attitude over the affairs of Algeciras, Bosnia and Agadir was correct; whereas, in fact, these moves were merely intended to test the strength of the Franco-British opposition.

These incidents were without doubt the pre-war precursors of Austria, Spain, Czechoslovakia and Danzig of our present critical times. While not actually the throwing down of the gage, they were intended to be irritants and the responding British attitude proved disturbing to the peace of mind of the Kaiser and he was moved to act more precipitately than his plans provided for. This much he knew: Britain would stand by France, and through France, Russia, in the event of a real crisis. And he forgot the advice given him by Bismarck—never to allow France and Britain to become reconciled.

But in 1914 he thought that England was paralysed. Ulster was threatening to resist with arms any attempt to subordinate her to a national Irish Parliament and England was divided, at least one-half declaring that Ulster was in the right and many high officers openly asserting that they would refuse to lead troops against the Ulstermen.

Civil war was almost a certainty. Liberalism was in the seat of Government and all European statesmen believed that it was a peace-at-any-price Government.

All the circumstances were weighed up and the Central Powers decided that the chances of England participating, or in fact being able to participate, in a general European war were remote. Alternatively, if she did come in, her Army was of no account and, according to report, mutinous, and her fleet would prove to be inefficient, if her own vociferous publicists spoke truth. The final brake on British intervention was the fear of revolt in Ireland and secession of her Dominions.

The hour for striking had arrived. But tradition demanded that the occasion should be manufactured, and it must have the appearance of unprovoked aggression.

On 28 June 1914 the "day" came. The Archduke Franz Ferdinand von Hapsburg, a prince generally believed to be Slavophile, was assassinated in the streets of Sarajevo, a Bosnian city. The murderers were subjects of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—but they were Serbs. That was enough. The murder was political—a Serbian plot engineered by the Serbian Government—about that the Austrian Government announced that it had no doubt, and events moved fast. The rest is history and has been handled by abler pens than mine.

. . . . .

Captain Franz von Papen, member of the German Imperial Staff and Military Attaché at the German Embassy in Washington, and the German Legation in Mexico, was speeding towards New York in early January 1914, to take up his duty. He mused over the situation, rubbed a speck of cigar ash from his coat sleeve and was content with things as he found them; he could worry later. He was young for the post, but he had been highly recommended to the Imperial Chancellor and to his Emperor as being "just the right man in the right place". He had his orders, which caused him a certain amount of perturbation.

He was a Prussian officer going in times of peace to a

friendly Power, receiving diplomatic immunity by virtue of his post. Yet he was ordered to carry out tasks which would make of him something worse than a common spy. He was also about to break what had now become a classic tradition. He was to attempt intervention in Mexico; he was to instigate revolt and destruction to divert world attention from the European scene, yet it had been tacitly agreed upon by all the European Powers that after the evacuation of the French troops of Napoleon III on the demand of the United States in 1876, affairs in the American Continent were to be free from all European interference.

Von Papen pondered deeply and sought for some excuse. He knew full well that the functions of a Military Attaché were to advise his Government, through the Ambassador and through the War Office, of military movements of the country to which he was accredited; he knew that he was the official representative of the German Army to that country and that in all things he was to constitute liaison between the military forces of both countries. He turned to his religious creed and found some succour, but his oath to his Emperor, the writings of his mentor, von Bernhardt, and the strict training of the Cadet Academy gave him the most on which he could answer his conscience and face his dubious task with a stout heart.

He was a Junker and the Junkers ruled in Germany. He was a German and the Germans were going to dominate the world, in which domination he was, so he pondered, going to play no small part. Like all serious-minded German officers of substantial rank, he was continually occupied with the study of methods to be employed in the coming war. He was to commence an offensive before war was declared—an offensive of a new military nature, contrary to all rules of war. After all, Schlieffen was strongly in favour of vigorous offensives and Schlieffen's plan was the German Staff officer's bible:—

“Take the offensive, like Alexander, Hannibal, Julius Caesar, Gustavus Adolphus, Turenne, Eugene and Frederick—do not look to half successes, but to immense and crushing blows. No war should be long drawn-out.”

Yes, he was going to take the offensive! Franz von Papen consoled himself with the thought that if his life was about to become dishonourable, his activities were controlled by his oath to his Emperor. He was not a free agent—had not his Emperor told him so in as many words, when on one occasion he had addressed the troops? “A soldier must have no will of his own; you must all be animated by one will, and that is my will. . . . I may have to order you to shoot down your own relatives, your brothers, nay, maybe your parents . . . which I hope to God may never be; but, even so, you are obliged to carry out my orders without protest.” Von Papen reached out for a straw and found it—it was Germany’s duty to utilize every means to protect her interests, or so von Bernhardi had said.

Smudges of smoke came up on the starboard bow and von Papen watched them with interest. Several hours later these smudges had transformed themselves into a British Destroyer Flotilla hurrying home for reconditioning, in readiness for the Naval Review to be held in Spithead in the coming July. The sight of the White Ensign proudly flaunting itself on the sternpost of each little sea-viper, reminded him of his mission . . . when would the two nations come to grips?

All that he had learned at the Cadet College and the War Academy came back to him—through blind obedience and self-effacement he had learned to become a commander of men—he had been taught that he was to serve Emperor and fatherland. Believing in the Divine Right of Kings, von Papen saw a connection between Throne and Church, and, in consequence, service to the Sovereign became a religious duty, and that duty was to take precedence over right.

Therefore of what account were the rights of other nations compared to the allegiance he owed his Emperor and, through him, to his God?

Through the centuries, particularly in Prussia, the military oath of allegiance to the Sovereign has come to be invested with something like mystic ritual, and the Junker officer, the devout Catholic, softly repeated the words he had uttered on a March morning, sixteen years before:—

"I, Franz von Papen, hereby personally swear to God the Omniscient and Almighty that I shall faithfully and loyally serve his Imperial Majesty the King of Prussia and Emperor of Germany, my most gracious Sovereign, on any and every occasion, on land or at sea, in war and in peace, and at every place whatsoever; that I shall further the All Highest's best advantage while averting from him injury and disadvantage; that I shall closely abide by the articles of War, that have been read to me, and precisely obey the orders I receive; and that I shall so conduct myself as it behoves an upright, fearless, dutiful and honourable soldier. So help me God through Jesus Christ and His Holy Gospel."

Yes! his oath bound him and at the same time, absolved him. Franz von Papen went below to dinner, having pondered a weighty matter and decided in favour of himself. He had been his own judge and jury, and thenceforward he entered upon his Jekyll and Hyde role, of diplomat and secret agent, until the hospitable shores of America became too hot to hold him.

Count Johann Heinrich Bernstorff was leisurely scanning some reports from Mexico. Soon, he hoped, some real disturbances would be occurring in that warm and lazy land, sufficient to occupy the attention on her Southern border of the country to which he was accredited, and thus keep her eyes from Europe. Here he was in Washington, Ambassador of Germany, in a country where much Germanic influence prevailed, from banking to delicatessen stores, from skilled engineers to dockside workers.

The American Government could not afford to ignore its millions of citizens who were descended from immigrants from the fatherland. Despite their American citizenship, Bernstorff mused, they yet remained true sons of Germany. All had become bilingual, and it was noteworthy that the rising generation spoke German, as well as English, at their mother's knee. In many large American cities whole areas were given over to German shops and offices while in other districts the German workers settled in street after street, in which nothing but the German language could be heard, until one imagined oneself in

Hamburg, Leipzig, or Düsseldorf. Yes, the German Ambassador thought, we Germans are a power in this much vaunted Democracy. We cannot be ignored nor can we be injured—it would bring down any administration. So we are free to carry out our plans in Europe and in the Orient, with the irritant of a troubled Mexico nearer home.

More papers were turned. Then a knock on the door. A tall, slim man entered, clicked his heels, saluted and bowed and then advanced to the paper-strewn desk at which the Ambassador sat. "Captain von Papen, come to report for duty, your Excellency!" announced the tall figure. "Ah, ja, da sind Sie ja mein lieber von Papen, wie geht's in Berlin?" responded Count Bernstorff, and both men settled down to a long talk of affairs as they stood when von Papen left Germany. The routine of his office was gone thoroughly into and the new codes discussed. Time was short and the newly arrived Attaché found that he was to move on to Mexico immediately.

"I have been anxiously awaiting your arrival," said the Ambassador, "because I feel that your services can be well employed in Mexico. As you know, we have a naval man as Minister to Mexico, Admiral von Hintze. He is worthy enough, but——" and with an expressive gesture Bernstorff gave von Papen to understand that an Army man could handle the situation better. "There is a fellow called Huerta, whom von Hintze thinks a drunken scoundrel, but who I think can be managed well enough to make life difficult for the Government down there. A little money and a few thousand rifles will work miracles, continued Bernstorff, "and the Kriegsministerium people are urging that you establish contact with him at the earliest possible moment. You'll find things fairly easy at the moment, because hell has just been popping off down there. You will find General Victoriano Huerta at——" and the conversation lapsed into technicalities.

Captain Franz von Papen, some while later, when taking leave of the Ambassador at the door of the latter's study, was the recipient of an afterthought from his chief. "Oh, if the gallant General proves sticky, there's always Carranza. He might be President now, but Mexico's a funny country

and—well, I leave it to you, Papen. My compliments to Admiral von Hintze—Aufwiederschen.”

The Westphalian nobleman let himself out of the Embassy and strolled along to his quarters to pack, whistling a few bars from Lehar's latest success, swinging his cane as he walked, looking quite the man-about-town and a picture of innocence.

A few days later found von Papen in the German Legation in Mexico, the capital of the troublesome republic of that name. “No. You are all wrong-headed in this matter,” grumbled Admiral von Hintze, “this Huerta fellow is not the man for us—there are others, but if you think that you can do anything with him, have a shot at it.”

A meeting was arranged with the filibustering Mexican General, but it seemed that he required time to think over the grand scheme put before him. He could not quite understand why Japan should be brought into a matter which was purely a private quarrel which he wished to carry on rather forcefully with the esteemed President Carranza, and he had no real wish to encourage the hard-riding *hombres* from over the border to repeat the raids of the last decade. No, he, General Victoriano Huerta, would think about it, meanwhile Captain von Papen, being a gentleman, would understand, as between gentlemen, that he had a certain position to maintain and things were just now a little expensive in Mexico. So the Mexican General was left with a tangible token of good faith and von Papen headed for the northern border to discuss the situation with his Ambassador.

He returned to his office in the Washington Embassy to attend to routine matters of calibres, bores and observations on manœuvres, to find an accumulation of mail in from Berlin. One letter he opened caused him to whistle—the time was getting near.

Ministry of War  
N. 536/14 g.A.I.  
Secret.

Leipzigerstrasse 5,  
Berlin W.66.

March 12, 1914

According to newspaper reports, several railway trains were blown up by revolutionaries during the trouble in Mexico. In order to form



an opinion whether, in the event of a European war, explosions of this kind would have to be reckoned with, it is requested that, if possible, information should be obtained as to how these attacks have been carried out. Were mines and explosives placed on lines which were little guarded, or were the attacks carried out from the train by igniting a charge of dynamite or by the employment of infernal machines?

By Order.

R. VON WILD.

To Herr von Papen, Royal Prussian Captain on the General Staff of the Army,  
Military Attaché at the Imperial German Embassy at Washington  
(Through the Foreign Office).

While von Papen read the letter, a refrain was sounding in his ear, "to utilize all and every means to protect her legitimate interests". But was Mexico a legitimate interest and what right had he to make himself a nuisance in America?

Every right, he argued. He was in the service of the Emperor and the Emperor was Right personified. His Catholic mind still saw the bond between throne and altar. So he went down to Mexico again to kill two birds with one stone. He could carry out his legitimate function as a Military Attaché and report upon those rather commonplace railway explosions and he would try to wean von Hintze from his avowed mistrust and dislike of Huerta.

. . . . .

With the manner of a medieval courtier, Franz von Papen assiduously strove to overcome von Hintze's doubts. The German Minister was definite on the point that any action would prove disastrous and would cause an immediate breach with the United States, who, God knows, must not be antagonized. Then the War Academy von Papen showed his hand and the von Bernhardt touch was applied. The broad aspect of German world expansion took on a wondrous form before the eyes of the nautical Minister, whose real job was ships and not statecraft. Could Germany achieve all this, pondered the gallant Admiral. This youngster seemed to have his facts correct—after all, he was well thought of in Berlin.

Day after day, the new Military Attaché softly and insidiously wormed his way into the older man's heart and at last von Hintze was completely won over to the scheme, reserving in his own mind that Huerta was, nevertheless, not trustworthy. He still remained in the Admiral's mind as a drunken filibuster.

Flushed with success, von Papen wrote post haste to Captain Boy-Ed, his Naval colleague in Washington, in the letter detailing his plans for the Mexican affair and describing how he had convinced Admiral von Hintze of the need for quick action.

The reply from the Naval Attaché is illuminating and shows another string leading to the Austrian Embassy in Washington, removing for all time any doubt that might have existed about the close collaboration of the Dual Monarchy with Germany, in the preparation for world aggression.

German Embassy,  
Washington D.C.

Washington.  
May 25, 1914.

To Captain von Papen,  
Military Attaché.  
(At present in Mexico.)

DEAR PAPEN,

Best thanks for your friendly and instructive letter of 11th May. Your arguments made a great impression, not only on Count Bernstorff, but also on the Austrian Ambassador. At Bernstorff's suggestion your letter was confidentially communicated to the latter. In his reply, Dumba said that your letter was remarkable for its terseness and lucidity. For my part, I was especially pleased by what you wrote about Huerta, the only strong man in Mexico. In my opinion, Admiral von Hintze was not quite right in his estimate of him. For Huerta can scarcely be such a drunken ruffian as Hintze so often implies, if only because a chronic drunkard could hardly have kept so uncertain a position under such uncommonly difficult circumstances. I met a number of people in Mexico City who were in close touch with Huerta, and without exception they all spoke very highly of the President's patriotism, capacity and energy.

I likewise do not share the views of our worthy Admiral about the timeliness or the possibility of international intervention. Hintze's attitude towards this question will be familiar to you from one of the

Embassy reports . . . on this subject. But I shall not repeat my argument, as I believe we have already corresponded on the matter.

Yours,

BOY-ED.

Having prepared the ground for the Mexican affair, von Papen settled down to several months hard work at the Legation in Mexico. Strange duties came to him, the like of which, if carried out by the Military Attaché of every country, would rapidly transform the world into a greater mad-house than it is, if that is at all possible. He organized the German Colony on semi-military lines and the danger of an *Imperium in Imperio* began rapidly to grow in easy-going Mexico.

A network of Agents was spread from coast to coast, reaching up into, and joining with others in, the United States. In common with modern methods of espionage, much of this work was cloaked by the ordinary trading activities of seemingly innocently organized merchanting houses in terminal towns and ports.

Then came the Austro-Serbian crisis, which rapidly developed in intensity, embroiling the whole of Europe. Von Papen had done his work well in Mexico; he could now turn his attention to the United States, whose importance, either as friend or foe, to Germany, became greater as the time went by and when each day might bring with it that briefly cabled message "war declared", with all the glory and disaster that no other two words could connote. He made his preparations to return to Washington, but before he went a report about the value of his work was sent from the German Minister to Mexico to Bethmann-Hollweg, the Imperial German Chancellor, which disclosed *inter alia*, how thorough had been his conversion to von Papen's way of thinking over the part Mexico might possibly play in a general conflagration.

To the Imperial Chancellor.  
Report No. 192.

Mexico.  
July 21, 1914.

Captain von Papen, the Military Attaché to the Imperial Legation, has been here since 23 March. He settled down into the com-

plicated situation rapidly and easily, and in a short time gained a sure judgment of his own, and in accordance therewith he acted usefully and without hesitation. He overcame the difficulty involved by his double accreditation (here in Mexico and the U.S.A.) with tact, and he leaves behind him on both sides the impression of an upright gentleman and an intelligent soldier. He showed special industry in organizing the German colony for purposes of self-defence, and out of this shy and factious material, unwilling to undertake any military activity, he obtained what there was to be got. His open, chivalrous, manner has won him many a friend in German circles; I myself am indebted to him by reason of these qualities.

Herr von Papen leaves on 30 July for Washington. I should be guilty of an omission if I did not mention him with commendation to your Excellency on this occasion. I would, however, go further, and humbly mention to your Excellency that I consider that "The Services of Captain von Papen during his appointment here warrant his recommendation to the favour of his Majesty the Emperor and King".

Captain von Papen already possesses, among Prussian decorations, the Royal Order of the Crown (4th class).

I humbly submit to your Excellency the request that you would be so good as to lay before his Majesty the proposal that he should bestow upon him the 4th class of the Order of the Red Eagle.

VON HINTZE.

To His Excellency,  
The Imperial Chancellor,  
Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg.  
J. No. 3117.

In about four months, Franz von Papen had not only altered a German diplomat's opinion on a very sore point, but had so impressed him with his merit that we find him strongly recommending him direct to the Chancellor for a high Prussian decoration. Since that time he has persuaded peasants, priests and presidents to his way of thinking, not to mention a painter who has now taken the place of his late Imperial Master. Out of small acorns great oaks grow.

The day before von Papen left Mexico, he remembered his function as Military Attaché and replied to the request from his War Office for information on certain railway explosions in Mexico.

Military Attaché

J.69.

Secret.

Ref: Subject-matter.

Blowing up of the Railway.

Mexico.

July 29, 1914.

I am convinced from personal evidence that all the recent cases of destruction of railway lines by explosion were brought about by burying dynamite under the line itself and then igniting it by an electric current as soon as the train has reached the appointed place.

I consider it out of the question that explosions prepared in this way would have to be reckoned with in a European war. They are only possible on lines that are ill-guarded, which, as in this country, often pass for miles through revolutionary districts and have no protection other than a pilot train in front of the passenger train.

The mountainous nature of the country and the highly artistic way in which the lines are laid (*kunstvolle tracierung*) greatly favour these attacks. Infernal machines, so far as I know, have never been employed.

PAPEN.

To the War Office.

As he signed the report, von Papen glanced at a cable fluttering on his desk, which read: "Austrian artillery bombard Belgrade; Russia and Belgium mobilizing."

"Donnerwetter . . . it's time I left for Washington," he exclaimed, and scribbled two telegrams, one to Washington and the other to Berlin, both in Naval cypher.

Military Attaché

No. 66/14.

Secret.

Captain Boy-Ed,  
German Embassy,  
Washington D.C.

Mexico.

29 July 1914.

Leaving Vera Cruz Sunday Mail Tug. If necessary arrange business for me too with Pavenstedt. Then inform Lersner. Russian Attaché ordered back to Washington by telegraph. On outbreak of war have intermediaries located by detectives where Russian and French intelligence office.

PAPEN.

Military Attaché  
To General Staff,  
Berlin.

Mexico.  
29 July 1914.

J. No. 67/14.  
Secret.

Leave 31 expect to arrive Washington 7 August. Naval Attaché requested to conduct the intelligence bureau if necessary till my arrival. Russian Military Attaché has orders to leave for Washington at once. Presumably in order to establish his intelligence bureau.

PAPEN.

This done, the scion of a Westphalian noble house proceeded to Vera Cruz, where he boarded the packet for New Orleans. Arriving on board he was handed a postal packet franked,

S. H. Hauptmann von Papen,  
Military Attaché,  
German Consulate,  
Vera Cruz.  
Via Galveston Torpedo Mail Service.

Going below, in the privacy of his special cabin reserved for him, he opened the letter and found that it was from the War Ministry in Berlin, forwarded by express from the Embassy in Washington.

He read and re-read his instructions and then applying a burning match to the batch of papers, he watched them disappear down to the last flake. The preparations were all finished; he was about to become a very important cog in the huge war machine of the greatest military power the world had ever known.

### CHAPTER III

By the time Captain von Papen arrived at his post of duty in Washington the world was aflame. Germany had declared war on Russia, the Empire with whom she had been at peace for almost a century, on 1 August, and both France and Germany were rushing troops to their frontiers. In England the Fleet was mobilized, and Germany had delivered a declaration of war in Paris. Germany invaded Belgium; and Britain, regarding that violation of Belgium's neutrality as a *casus belli*, withdrew its Ambassador in Berlin and the two great nations, with so much in common but separated by misinterpretations of might and right, found themselves at war with each other; Prussia, whom England had so often befriended in the past, being at the head of a sturdy array of German-speaking peoples.

Turning to the American national newspapers, von Papen looked eagerly for news from Germany. A scare headline caught his eye. "'Necessity knows no law,' declares German Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg." He read on and was not surprised to find that the Chancellor's apologia for the invasion of Belgium coincided with the new philosophy which he himself had adopted since his time at the War Academy and his association with von Bernhardi. He was not susceptible to the propaganda stories contained in the German language press of America, which retailed how the world in arms was about to fall on prosperous Germany and rend her apart.

He had his orders—there was von der Goltz in Asia Minor, innocent explorers in the Orient, Central and Coastal Africa and South America, all, peculiarly enough, at the outbreak of war, travelling in areas which could be considered key positions—coaling stations, victualling yards, cable stations, and lonely colonies administered by

a few Europeans, whose superstitious natives could readily be urged to rise against their present white masters in exchange for promises from the new.

Like all these Germans, who were waiting for their *Tag* and who dreamed of nothing but a great world Empire, von Papen had his place in the scheme of things, and a very important place, owing to the British blockade, he and his superiors in Berlin hoped it would prove.

In the early days of the war, the powers that be in Germany thought of a brisk and successful campaign. Therefore, the question of supplies was not too early visualized. The main thing was to convince the neutral countries that Germany was winning, despite the real truth of the set-back on the Franco-Belgian front and the terrific onslaught of the Russians in East Prussia.

The American correspondents in Berlin were not too obliging, so consequently many German officers became pamphleteers and wrote highly coloured articles for the American Press, extolling German arms and belittling the allied defence. That, of course, was something new in war.

The Military Attaché at Washington, among other functions, became literally a press officer for the German High Command; and who else but von Bernhardt should open up the press barrage? While the Russians were hammering almost at the gates of Berlin, the literary General, at General Headquarters at Posen, was inditing controversial articles for consumption by the American public via the columns of the *New York Sun*, von Papen acting as a post office in the matter, receiving the manuscript and passing it on, and mailing the General's press cuttings for his orderly to reserve carefully against the day when he would write his history of Germany's struggle.

At the Berlin end the American Military Attaché's code was tampered with and his dispatches were so altered as to cause the State Department temporarily to issue bulletins contrary to facts and to the reports of the newspaper correspondents. The Attaché in question, Major Langhorne, was ultimately recalled.



The German officer who was responsible for this deception, Captain von Rintelen, has since written: "I was pricked by conscience at the way in which I had acted, but I consoled myself with the thought that Germany was facing a world in arms, a vastly superior force, which would perhaps crush her if she did not use every means in her power to defend herself."

Almost the same words as von Bernhardi had employed!

About a few Germans who were engaged in the World War there seems to have been a net drawn and their lives seemed to be contained within a triangle, drawn from Berlin to America and from there across to Turkey and Asia Minor. Inexorably their lives have been bound up in a series of incidents, but of that more anon, for we must not anticipate our adventures.

. . . . .

By the end of August, while yet occupied with his dissemination of hopeful articles from Germany, von Papen had spread a network of espionage agents over the whole of the United States of America. From an office on Wall Street, the firm of G. Amsinck & Company carried on an ostensibly thriving trade as general merchants, commission agents and bill discounters, and it appeared, from the regular visits of Franz von Papen, that he had considerable business with the firm. Actually he used this firm as a blind for the whole of his extra-diplomatic activities. It was at this place of business that he saw the ruffians who hazarded the dangerous tasks thought out by him. Here, too, came the kid-glove variety of secret agents, the German gentlemen, many of whom masqueraded as bluff American professional and business men.

A favourite suggestion of von Papen, made so many times to the more presentable "customers" at the house of Amsinck, was that they should seek employment with the British Secret Service, for an obvious purpose. Notable among these was a Mr. Bridgeman Taylor, who spoke immaculate English, so perfect, in fact, that when he came over to England to offer himself for work under His Majesty's Government, he was suspect at once and was

found to be none other than Count von der Goltz, of a family so distinguished in Germany as to warrant the naming of a battleship after its earlier and distinguished head. He remained in England much longer than he anticipated.

On 1 September 1914 von Papen gave Mr. Bridgeman Taylor a cheque for \$200, drawn on The Riggs National Bank, Washington. The number of endorsements on this cheque proved that Mr. Taylor negotiated it by means other than through his own bank, for we find that G. W. Taylor, Bridgeman Taylor, F. Stallforth, German-American Bank, and the Second National Bank, all had a hand in payment. With practice and experience came caution, and he soon began to make cheques payable to Amsinck & Co, but thoughtlessly inscribing the name of the actual recipient on the counterfoil of the cheque.

From Ottawa to New Orleans, from Seattle to New York, the network of agents spread and soon the official German representatives in the United States had news of every important munition deal that was afoot, for by this time America was a Mecca to which all the belligerent Powers sent their agents to buy up every available bullet and piece of equipment. The prodigality of the Russian artillery against the Austro-German forces quickly spent what small reserves of munition the Muscovite possessed and dashing Russian attachés were to be seen in the waiting-rooms of the palatial offices of the arms-mongers, hoping for even a few hundred rounds of ammunition that the others did not want.

At first, von Papen through his agents sought to buy supplies of all kinds, in the hope that the purchases could reach Germany in neutral bottoms and by indirect overland routes, but the activities of the British sea patrols and the menace of the Germans' own submarines, rendered any large-scale shipment impossible.

The Allied Governments poured money into the United States, which was promptly supplemented by the American banks, themselves advancing money to the munition factories, taking the English, French and Russian contracts

as security. Towards the close of 1914, any excuse made seaworthy old tramp steamers, well past their day of usefulness in normal times; and they waddled across the North Atlantic like lame ducks, to bring out of American ports the instruments of death.

Day by day their number increased, until soon every port on the eastern seaboard of America, was choked with shipping, while the piles of packing-cases containing their cargoes grew higher and higher on the quayside, watched over by the secretly armed agents of the purchasers and not a little discontent from the dockers, who were in fretful mood, partly genuine and partly due to the distribution of marks converted into dollars, having their origin in the offices of Amsinck & Co. These death ships unloaded their cargoes on the shores of the Allied Powers and the artillery hurled them with destructive force into the German trenches.

After a few weeks, during which time German munition production had suffered from the ca'canny policy of the German workers, the German High Command was moved to protest to Berlin against the seemingly unlimited supply of ammunition coming out of America to the Allies. Notes were sent to the American Government, which evoked the reply that America was prepared to supply munitions to any country which would order them, and, of course, pay for them.

A straight answer in all conscience, but how could Germany transport the goods she bought, with the British Navy covering her shores?

The Wilhelmstrasse called on Captain von Papen to explain matters and to render a report on the situation. With the terseness applauded by von Hintze a few months earlier, he replied:

"Every munition factory is working overtime on Allied orders. The ports are filled with transports loading munitions for France, Russia and England. Steps must be taken to stop it."

Hindenburg, Ludendorff, Falkenhayn and Hoffmann, each in turn received a copy of this and Falkenhayn wrote

on his copy, "not only must something be done, as the Attaché remarks, but something must really be done."

Something was done; von Papen's activities were again enlarged and he was supplied with more funds and extra assistance. Germany could not buy and transport munitions from America, but she could buy such supplies in America, conserve or destroy them, thus preventing the Allies from securing such large supplies as heretofore.

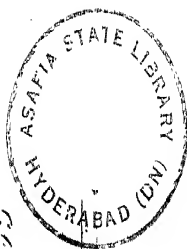
Some German agents were in America who followed this plan of attempting to corner the munition market; others followed the order "Buy what you can, destroy what you can't". A third section, led by von Papen, adopted a policy of wholesale destruction and terrorism in munition plants and against the transport services inside the shores of friendly America.

It could not be hoped, of course, that this policy would be an enduring one, because even the German agents knew that there would come a point at which American patience would break, but they counted on the goodwill of many influential Americans and were encouraged by the knowledge that there were elements in American political life which sought to avoid, as far as possible, any rupture with Germany, because of the ill-effect on, or even boycott of, American goods after the war by a possibly victorious Germany.

To assist the saboteurs, fake passport-issuing offices were secretly established throughout the States of America, in the first four months of the war, being directly controlled by A. von Wedell, into whose pockets regular remittances came from the merchant firm of G. Amsinck & Co., but von Papen wrote the cheques on his own account at The Riggs National Bank and the counterfoils went made out like this:

No. 52. 21 November 1914  
Order of G. Amsinck & Co.  
(für A. von Wedell \$300)  
\$400

11.  
 To the Legation of the German Empire, Berlin  
 New York, Nov 24<sup>th</sup> 1913  
 Paid to the order of G. Amisnck & Co. \$ 400.00  
 For cash on Hand or Letter Letter  
K. von Papen



Bal. Brought forth Deposits:	100.00		1913
	G. Amisnck & Co.		
	For Cash on Hand, 100.00		
Less Ch. Via	500.00		
Carried forth.	100.00		

COPY OF A CHEQUE DRAWN BY VON PAPAN TO THE ORDER OF G. AMISNCK & CO., BUT WHOSE COUNTERFOIL DISCLOSES IT TO BE, INTER ALIA, PAYMENT TO VON WEDELL, WHO RAN THE FAKE PASSPORT ISSUING OFFICE

No. 56. 24 November 1914  
Order of G. Amsinck & Co  
(für Wedell \$240 Gonzales 150)  
\$400

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No. 57. 24 November 1914  
Order of G. Amsinck & Co.  
(für Wedell \$500)  
\$600

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No. 59. 30 November 1914  
Order of G. Amsinck & Co.  
(für Wedell 500, für mich \$100)  
\$600

Quite apart from the many terrorists roaming the United States during these months, protected by the forged passports issued by von Wedell, America was made a jumping-off ground for many undesirable foreigners who sought, and in many cases effected, illegal entry into Britain, usually through the protection of von Wedell's passports. The number of such passports confiscated from the persons who presented them at English ports is unknown to the general public, but they may rest assured that the number collected were in excess of those which passed muster.

Perhaps the most notable holder of any passport issued by von Wedell was Ignatz Trebitsch, alias Trebitsch Lincoln, alias Litzrodt, alias König and many other names, suitable to the occasion and convenient to the moment. This man even in 1914 had quite possibly the blackest record of all engaged in international espionage. He knew no country. He bought and sold secrets to all and sundry, and while taking the pay of a spy from one country, he would sell even what little he knew of that country's secret to the highest bidder. This was the class of man that von Papen had as helpmate.

The name Trebitsch Lincoln has doubtless already struck a note of familiarity to most readers. Yes, this was the self-same man who sat in the House of Commons as a Liberal member for Darlington for some while before the war.

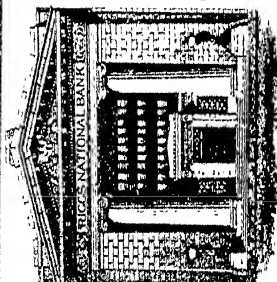
Captain Franz von Papen, German gentleman, a communicant of the Catholic Church in Germany, and a son of devoutly religious parents, whose creed taught the brotherhood of man, was for many months a close collaborator of this man, whom we will call by the name under which he was first known, Ignatz Trebitsch, born of Jewish parents, whose creed also preached the brotherhood of man and who, in common with the Catholic von Papen, had been taught the law of God as given to Moses, "thou shalt not kill". These two men, from the first moment of their collaboration, broke that law and spread around them terror and sudden death.

Trebitsch was born at Pecs in Hungary in 1879; incidentally, the same year as von Papen. He went to school in Budapest until he was thirteen years of age, when he was sent to Pressburg to learn German, and the things necessary to a useful professional or commercial career. In common with many other men who have at different times roamed the world as adventurers, he decided to become an actor and this provoked a quarrel with his father during the last term of his degree course at Pressburg University.

Disowned by his father, Trebitsch was converted to a form of Protestantism—a Jewish sect that believed in Christ, becoming finally converted to the faith of Luther, entering a theological college of the German Protestant Missionary Society. His residence here was not of long duration, for the Dean of the Faculty discovered him in an affair with the daughter of a retired sea-captain, and in consequence of the revelations he was expelled.

The next that was heard of Trebitsch was his preaching the gospel of Christ to Jews in Canada. In 1902 he made another change in his religion and was ordained in the Anglican Church, later receiving a living in Kent, where he became a model parson, having also married his early love, the sea-captain's daughter.

This rather tame existence palled, and with his wife's money, her father having gone where cash has no utility, Trebitsch blossomed out into business in London, at the same time forsaking the pulpit for the more spacious forum



No. 87

WASHINGTON, D.C.

June 18<sup>th</sup> 1915

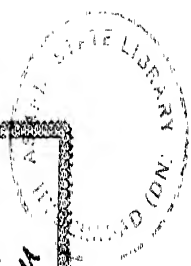
# The Kings National Bank

CAPITAL PAID UP \$100,000

RESERVE FUND \$100,000

FAIRLY EGG & CO.

Pay to the order of *G. Kinsnick & Co.*  
*Seven hundred 00/100* Dollars  
*Three hundred 00/100*



*Bal. Brought forth*  
*Deposits:*

*Less Ch. No.*  
*Carried forth.*

No. *87*  
*June 18* 1915  
Order of *G. Kinsnick & Co.*  
*(for Horn)*  
*\$ 900 00*

COPY OF THE CHEQUE WHOSE PROCEEDS WENT TO WERNER HORN, AS PAYMENT FOR HIS ABORTIVE ATTEMPT TO BLOW UP VANCEBORO'S BRIDGE A FORTNIGHT LATER



of the House of Commons, to which the electors of Darlington sent him, on the distinct understanding that his name was Timothy Trebitsch Lincoln. After fifteen years of wild speculation in Near East oilfields, the while pursued by the chimera that tremendous wealth was "just around the corner", he lost everything, including the confidence of the simple, but hard-working citizens of Darlington.

Shunned by one-time friends and harassed by insistent creditors, the ex-M.P. turned to that occupation which to many is always a raft on which they may cling and float over the wreckage of their earlier life. For years before the commencement of the Great War, he was in the pay of the German General Staff, in whose unofficial service he visited almost every country. As an English Member of Parliament he had acquired certain valuable information, and quite additional to his normal parliamentary duties, he had, by means best known to himself, become possessed of the British plans for counter-espionage, including the names of certain key-men.

These plans he sold to the Reich and from thence onward he was in the pay of the German Secret Service.

On the declaration of war, Trebitsch Lincoln fled England and a few weeks later, on instructions from Berlin conveyed via the German Consul-General in Rotterdam, he reported to Count Bernstorff at the Imperial German Embassy in Washington, who detailed him to von Papen's staff of saboteurs.

. . . . .

Following upon the purchase of isolated supplies of explosives with money drawn on von Papen by certain gentlemen named von Skal, König, Othmer, von Igel, Kuepferle and Tauscher, the latter incidentally being an acknowledged agent of Krupp, a series of explosions in key positions and munition wharves and factories occurred throughout the United States.

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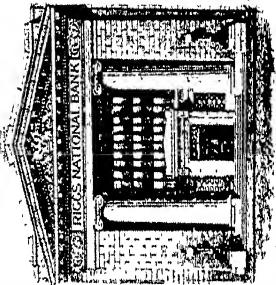
On the turn of the year 1914-15, the German Military Attaché at the Washington Embassy was busily engaged

in breaking the Foreign Enlistment Acts. He issued black-white-and-red badges to the simple, but patriotic souls who sought means of serving their fatherland, and the wearing of this badge convinced them that they were soldiers of the Reich and that when engaged upon their acts of sabotage and terrorism, they were acting in a military capacity.

A particularly unpleasant example of these patriotic badge-men is the case of Werner Horn, a man who wished to serve his country. He, simple man that he was, swallowed the "soldier badge" story, hook, line and sinker, and paid dearly for his trust. On 18 January 1915, Captain Franz von Papen sat at his desk and wrote a cheque, number 87 in his cheque-book. On the cheque itself he wrote, G. Amsinck & Company, but on the counterfoil, as he wrote, could be seen the words, G. Amsinck & Co. (für Horn) 700 dollars. On 2 February an attempt was made to blow up Vanceboro' bridge, connecting Canada and the United States. The man concerned was Horn; his home-made bomb did not go off and he was subsequently arrested by detectives of the U.S. State Department. After a trial, arising out of which, several other recipients of Amsinck's cheques were caught, Werner Horn was sentenced to several years, imprisonment in an American penitentiary, then held in a detention camp as an enemy citizen. After this suffering, he was delivered up to the Canadian authorities and received further imprisonment at their hands, in 1924 being repatriated to his native Germany, broken in mind and body.

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As the months went by von Papen found it more difficult to attract men to serve under him. After each explosion or railway accident, always accompanied by heavy loss of life and valuable war material, the entire Press of the North American Continent raised the question of guilt. Soon the constant repetitions caused serious anti-German demonstrations, for it became more than a coincidence that after each disaster German citizens were arrested and tried for complicity. The British counter-espionage service



# The Riggs National Bank

FORMERLY RIGGS & CO

Pay to the order of Paul H. Riggs & Co.  
Five hundred and no/100 \$500.00  
D. H. Riggs



But. Brought forth  
Deposits.

\$500

By, J. H. Riggs  
Cashier, St. Louis  
Trebitsch National Bank

Less Ch. Va.

Carried forth

\$500.00

IT WILL BE NOTICED THAT THIS CHEQUE IS A PAYMENT DIRECT BY VON PAPER TO PAUL KONIG, ONE OF TREBITSCH LINCOLN'S MANY ALIASES. THE COUNTERFOIL IS SELF-EXPLANATORY.

found tracks that led to the German and Austrian Embassies. Here and there German merchant-service skippers and engineers; when in their cups, boasted of their association with certain influential Germans. The information was handed over to the American authorities, but they were chary of acting upon it lest America should be accused of showing preference to one side of the contestants in the war.

Gradually von Papen found his men surly and unwilling to undertake their work; even to their simple minds, the gallant captain of Uhlans was stepping in dangerous places, and too high a percentage of the underdogs in the conspiracy were being caught. In fact, the Horn affair was the beginning of this uneasiness and those Germans living under the protection of the Stars and Stripes, who valued their liberty, refused point blank to have anything to do with von Papen and his *Irrenhaus* (madhouse).

A peculiar and regular coincidence occurs in the lives of those who are closely associated with Franz von Papen; after occurrence of the event for which much close collaboration has been put in, the less important member of the partnership departs from this mortal plane. The last twenty-five years of von Papen's life have been strewn, as will be seen, with tragedies. Werner Horn was the first to be broken on the Papen wheel of fate, the first of a long line of suicides, murders and executions.

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About the same time as Trebitsch Lincoln, the spy, was closeted with Bernstorff and von Papen in the German Embassy in Washington, discussing the best way to follow up von Papen's contact with Huerta in Mexico and whether the Mexican should have more money or no more money and a larger supply of Mauser rifles and ammunition, a certain Captain Franz von Rintelen was attached to the Naval War Staff in Berlin and was rushing round Berlin at dead of night trying to find a key to the vaults of the Reichsbank, for he wanted five million gold marks to send to Constantinople to fuel and victual the German warships *Goeben* and *Breslau*, locked up in the Turkish harbour

after a hearty chase by French and British warships. Rintelen was a man of action and he was successful in his quest. Sailorlike, he did his job and then went back to his routine work in Naval Intelligence.

At the Admiralty in London sat a quiet Naval Officer through whose hands all threads of Naval Intelligence passed. His hawk-like eye scanned reports, after the reading of which he would move different coloured pins here or there on a variety of maps. He was a cat watching thousands of mice; he waited patiently for months, sometimes several years, to catch particularly large mice. There were not many happenings in America unknown to this quiet man. Admiral Sir Reginald Hall was interested in the Austrian and German Embassies in Washington. He could wait, for the one or the other would make a false move.

In Washington and New York, Captain Franz von Papen was combining the duties of diplomat, engineer, financier, expert on ballistics, and saboteur.

Fate was drawing these three men closer together—fate, and the desperate need of Germany.

In early April 1915, Captain Franz von Rintelen arrived in New York, to which he had travelled from Germany on a false passport, on a secret mission. As a result of von Papen's telegram to Berlin, "that something must be done" Rintelen was instructed to destroy ruthlessly, by all means in his power, as much munitions and equipment destined for the Allies as possible.

Franz von Rintelen falls into the cleaner category of secret agents—he had no protection.

If discovered he would be repudiated; he was not diplomatically accredited and could obtain no "safe conduct".

His first place of call was the German Club, to discuss matters with the German Naval and Military Attachés and to deliver to them personally the new secret code for use between the Embassy staff and Berlin. Both von Papen and Boy-Ed had received instructions to collaborate with von Rintelen, but in the history of that period immediately preceding America's entry into the World War,

precious little evidence is available to prove that real collaboration existed. Quite the opposite prevailed, for, as can be imagined, both von Papen and Boy-Ed were affronted by the appearance of a new man, who would demand, by virtue of his *Kaiserpass*, any and every assistance from every German in the States, from the Ambassador down to the meanest labourer.

By this time, too, von Papen was becoming reckless and he seemed blind to his breaches of international law. He thought that his office at Amsinck & Company was like his room at the German Embassy, extra-territorially protected, and he became annoyed when he learned that his office had been raided and run through with a fine comb by members of the American Secret Service. He talked of Notes from his Foreign Office, but by that time in the conduct of the war, the American Government had come to learn how little Notes counted—for in all conscience the Germans had received enough, with scant results. The matter went so far as a strong protest from the German Ambassador. Robert Lansing, the Secretary of the State Department at Washington, retorted that he would willingly return any property taken away by his officers, providing von Papen would identify the goods and documents.

Von Papen had his own knowledge to guide him as to what possible incriminating documents were found in his office, but he resented the interference of the American Government, and with renewed zeal set about organizing great acts of sabotage, which culminated in such affairs as the famous Black Tom disaster and the Kingsland incident. These bloody catastrophes, in which thousands of lives were lost and towns were laid in ruins, were not at the time reported in the Press because of governmental instructions to suppress the news, for fear of what consequences might befall the German-speaking population in both U.S.A. and Canada, angered as the common people were by such regular occurrences.

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The American State Department, by now more fully cognizant of the activities of von Papen's staff of saboteurs,

came to believe the reports of the British counter-espionage service, yet because of the political tension they held their hand, being content with trying to fit the pieces of von Papen, Boy-Ed, Rintelen, Lincoln and literally hundreds of others into the complete whole.

Von Papen, the Westphalian nobleman and Prussian officer, was impervious to good advice, with the result that in May 1915 the German saboteurs began to drift apart and to work more on their own initiative. This lack of co-operation was the beginning of the end.

For some while the British had been possessed of the new secret code handed to von Papen and Boy-Ed by von Rintelen on his arrival in New York in April, and Admiral Hall read von Papen's wireless reports as they were in transmission to Berlin. These reports mentioned von Rintelen and the names of many who were working with the German Military Attaché and with the non-accredited saboteur; yet there was little enough to warrant action. Nevertheless, British Intelligence Officers were on von Papen's track, their efforts largely facilitated by his own actions.

The saboteurs-in-chief were drifting apart; von Papen found no favour in Von Rintelen's eyes, and although he had a roaming commission and orders to co-operate with Captain von Papen, he largely worked on his own. Although von Rintelen had good cause, later in 1915, to curse von Papen for his clumsiness and amateur methods of espionage, he at least had to thank him for the introduction to the German, Dr. Scheele, who was the inventor of the delayed-explosion chamber, whose method of burning its lead casing completely destroyed all traces of its existence after the explosion. Dr. Scheele had been negotiating with von Papen for some while and his experiments had gone on over a considerable period. Tauscher the Krupp agent who was a member of von Papen's ignoble company, had on occasion supplied him with considerable quantities of picric acid—more than one would expect to find in the possession of a diplomat, anyhow.

With the financial support of the German Embassy in Washington, Dr. Scheele had developed an infernal

machine whose main quality fitted in with the submarine policy of the German High Seas Naval Command, while its existence, after it had performed its dastardly work, left no trace. It was claimed to be untraceable by its inventor and the number of munition ships lost at sea through explosions of unknown origin proved the validity of Dr. Scheele's claim.

Actually, the invention was a type of detonator, about the size of a banana, its casing made of lead divided into two compartments by means of a copper disc, with the ends of the casing sealed with strong wax stoppers, capped with lead. Each compartment contained a different acid, which ate through the copper disc, and which acted as a time fuse—the thicker the disc the more delayed the explosion. Naturally, immediately the disc was eaten through, the two acids burst into flame by their action and the resulting flames shot out through the wax at both ends of the cylinder. One of these delightful little things, duly adjusted, was sufficient to send any munition ship or factory skywards.

Through the use of Scheele's bombs, which were easily placed in transports and factories by Irish and German saboteurs masquerading as dockers and labourers, Rintelen saw to the destruction of munitions which had got as far as the dockside and thence aboard the transports, while von Papen's men, wherever possible, through timely use of the little bundles of concentrated destruction, saw to it that munitions anticipated their function by a premature explosion in their place of birth.

There were many occasions on which von Papen behaved in the manner of the sinister stranger in the cheapest of thrillers, but perhaps the most glaring is the instance of his sending a letter to von Rintelen, not to his club, which all the leading Germans used in New York and which would have occasioned no comment, but to his bank.

For a month or two the firm of E. V. Gibbons Inc., otherwise Franz von Rintelen, had handled millions of dollars through its account at this particular bank and when the staff saw an envelope addressed to S. H. Herrn Kapitän Leutnant von Rintelen, being handed to the man whom



they had accepted as the Mr. Gibbons, of Gibbons Incorporated, tongues began to wag and it was not long before the British agents heard of the incident.

On 13 August 1915, while returning to Berlin on the Holland-American liner *Noordam* to report, von Rintelen was arrested by a boarding party from a British auxiliary cruiser and taken to London, where he came face to face with a man who had followed his activities through the obliging wireless messages of von Papen—Admiral Sir Reginald Hall—and he was interned as an undesirable alien who had landed in England without permission. The *dénouement* was to come later, at the turn of the year.

Why did von Papen send that letter to von Rintelen? Why not have sent it to his club or office? If it was sheer incompetence it is unforgivable; a man who is the Military Attaché of a great Power should possess greater sense of his surroundings and the forces always working, even in peace-time, against the diplomats, whose affairs, activities and motives are not so immune from clandestine investigation as is their physical immunity from the law of the land to which they are accredited, if they seek to claim it. The suggestion that Franz von Papen is not a responsible person has been put forward many times, in connection with his various activities. He is no fool. He is careless, but that is not the badge of foolishness. He is reckless, but recklessness is a sign of courage. He possesses that same streak which can be found in great financiers—the blind complacency of the great, the obsession of self-importance which blinds them to the necessity of planning the smaller details, the neglect of which has sent many to gaol. The almost perfect crime has often been detected and the criminal brought to book, by the lack of the most simple precautions.

Did von Papen send that letter as a trap, in order that the authorities might expel von Rintelen and thus remove a competitor for laurels? If so, then the Catholic Westphalian nobleman broke his oath to his Emperor, for in injuring a fellow officer he injured the Emperor's cause. Only Franz von Papen knows.

At any rate, about this time the invisible war in progress

in the United States began to wear down the nerves of every German engaged in it. How terrible the feeling must be when a saboteur opens his newspaper, to read of the havoc wrought by his own machinations only he can tell. The saboteurs became jumpy, conscious as they were of the net closing in around them. Each imagined that the other would allow too much to become known, each fondly thinking that his method was better than the others' and was foolproof. It was in this frame of mind, induced by the magnitude of disasters to which his gang could lay claim, that Franz von Papen telegraphed a warning to Captain Boy-Ed that the latter's operations were known to the Federal authorities.

The Naval Attaché's reply, which was by letter be it noted, ran as follows:

DEAR PAPEN,

A secret agent, who returned from Washington this evening, made the following statement: "The Washington people are very excited about von Papen and are having a constant watch kept on him. They are in possession of a whole heap of incriminating evidence against him.

They have no evidence against Count B. (Bernstorff, the German Ambassador) and Captain B.-E. In this connection I would suggest with due diffidence that perhaps the first part of your telegram is worded rather too emphatically.

Yours ever,

B.-E.

This retort veiled the disagreement that had sprung up between these two who should have been standing together, for a new danger threatened.

The daily increase in terrorism had so annoyed the great American public that Congressmen were being pressed by their constituents for a firmer attitude towards this carrying of the European war into a peaceful country, with the result that a new law was rushed through Congress, imposing the death penalty on anyone found guilty of, or implicated in, acts of sabotage.

In the late autumn of 1915 the German Government planned the building of huge fleets of submarines of large tonnage, fitted as cargo carriers to run the blockade of German shores by the Allies. For several months previous to this, quite distinct from the sabotage campaign, von Papen had been dealing with certain ammunition factories, ultimately signing contracts with them, for the supply, to German specification, of shrapnel cases, shrapnel and high explosives, all of which would have been transported to Germany by the submarine fleet then building, if conditions had been otherwise than they were.

Contracts were signed as early as April of that year, and because correspondence was addressed to a Mr. Carl Heynen, it has, on many occasions, been maintained that von Papen was not party to these transactions. Below is a sample of the correspondence that passed:

Mr. Carl Heynen, Room 1807  
60 Wall Street, New York City.

Bridgeport, Conn.  
September 11, 1915.

DEAR SIR,

Specifications and drawings for 3-015 shrapnel cases and 4-11 high explosive shell duly received, and beg to advise as follows:—

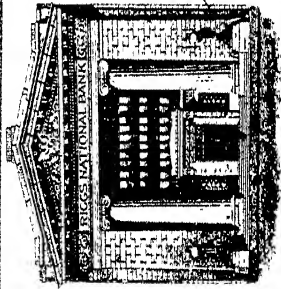
First—we will be unable to furnish steel under both physical and chemical specifications owing to the fact that manufacturers of steel in the United States will only assume responsibility under one of these requirements. Our quotations are based on furnishing steel as per physical requirements only, as this, in our opinion, is the most essential.

Second—Shrapnel cases: The steel already ordered will not be suitable for the new case, owing to the fact that it is greater in length and diameter than the present style. The additional cost, covering material, labour, tools, etc., will be 50c. per case. This does not include diaphragm head, only the finished and banded case, in accordance with new drawings and specifications furnished.

Third—High explosive shells: Price on this steel in lots of 500,000 is \$13.00 each. This does not include the head, but includes the finished steel in all other respects; also the banding of same, all in accordance with drawings and specifications furnished. The above prices are based on present market conditions of labour, material.

Yours very truly,

The Bridgeport Projectile Company,  
WALTER H. KNIGHT, President.



No. 145

WASHINGTON, D.C.

July 10, 1915

# The Kings National Bank

15-3

FOR DEPOSIT ONLY

Pay to the order of

Wm. H. H. H. H.

Washington, D.C.

Fifty eight

Dollars

\$68.00

July 10, 1915



Bal. Brought forth  
Deposits:

4086 28

July 10, 1915

Wm. H. H. H.

Washington, D.C.

Less the Va.

08

Carried forth

4086 28

July 10, 1915

COPY OF A CHEQUE GIVEN TO TAUSCHER, KRUPP'S AGENT IN U.S.A. IN 1914-15. NOTE THE WORDING ON THE COUNTERFOIL "PICRIC ACID."

Quite a harmless document, for, after all, Germany was as free as any other belligerent Power to negotiate purchases of munitions in the United States. But Germany already had an official purchasing commission in that country headed by a certain Geheimrat Albert. This secretive method adopted by von Papen only added to the general resentment against the German cause.

The following memorandum of a conference held in New York between Mr. George W. Hoadley, Captain F. von Papen, Captain Hans Tauscher and Mr. Carl Heynen, renders futile von Papen's denial of complicity in transactions of this nature.

December 21, 1915.

It was agreed that the American shrapnel shell shall be manufactured until instructions to the contrary are received. Mr. Hoadley states that it would take at least three months to get the tools necessary for the manufacture of shell of any different design. Mr. Hoadley states that, since the date of the original contract wages to skilled labour had increased 25% to 50%, and the price of steel 50% to 100%. Mr. Hoadley stated that the American steel manufacturers never guarantee both the chemical and physical specifications of steel; that they guarantee either the chemical or physical only. American steel never comes up to the German specifications, because of its different process of manufacture. In case that shells of German design are ordered, it will be impossible to make firing tests unless a gun and the necessary accessories are shipped from Germany to here. As a substitute, it is suggested to make such firing in a bomb-proof place by electrical explosion. It was agreed that Mr. Hoadley, till date, has complied with all the conditions of the contract of 1 April, with the exception of the commencement of the delivery of shells, which is due to *force majeure*, i.e. to failure to timely obtain the delivery of machinery and tools occasioned by strikes in the machine factory.

. . . . .

At the beginning of December 1915 the patience of the American Government became exhausted, and Secretary of State Mr. Robert Lansing demanded that the German Government should recall Captain von Papen and Captain Boy-Ed, as both these diplomats were no longer *persona grata*, von Papen being charged with conspiring to incite

Huerta to provoke unrest and rebellion in Mexico to the detriment of the United States' interests, storing arms in New York and being actively associated with von Rintelen, who was by now comfortably held in durance at Donnington Hall, to which place he had been confined by the British Government, after his interrogation by Admiral Hall. The decision was taken by President Wilson, Secretary of State Lansing and Attorney-General Gregory, after they had all been in conference at the White House. At the same time, and for much the same reasons, the recall of the Austrian Ambassador, Dr. C. Dumba, was demanded.

Methodically Captain von Papen prepared to return to Germany, selling first his horse and then his motor-car. On 9 December Count Bernstorff called him into his room and handed him a telegram from Berlin:—

“His Majesty decided to recall Papen and Boy-Ed. Please inform the American Government and demand safe conduct; Also for successors, in case we decide to send any.”

Foreign Office.

“There are your orders, Papen,” said Bernstorff. “I don’t suppose that you are so unhappy at being able to shake the dust of this country from your feet. You can put in some real soldiering now, for I suppose you’ll go back to your regiment. You know that the demand for your recall is a bit belated, but it was bound to come, only I must admit to surprise at its suddenness. Oh! I am leaving the matter of your safe conduct in Haniel’s hands. Meanwhile, I wish you’d have a word with a young fellow who has just come out from Germany to carry on in your place. He is a cavalryman too—‘Death Head Hussars’—good military stock and all that, father’s a Colonel or something—got an uncle who is a General.”

Lifting the house telephone, the Ambassador called, “Ask Lieutenant von Ribbentrop to come to my room.”

Thus there was brought about a meeting of two men, who, little though either knew it, were to hold high rank in a future Germany. They were both obsessed by the same

idea—a great Germany—and they both believed in the permanence of Germany. Both had good cause to be monarchists and both had become keen believers in the dictum “All’s fair in love and war”.

But how did it come about that here in Washington was a young German officer on active service?

Ribbentrop had made an adventurous Atlantic crossing in a German U-boat and was still slightly cramped from his long confinement in such unhealthy quarters. The Imperial General Staff had sent him to America, despite his protests that he preferred field service with his regiment, because he knew conditions in the North American Continent, having been working in a civilian capacity in Canada at the outbreak of war.

After a brief exchange of the conventionalities, the young lieutenant of the 12th Hussar Regiment was led away by von Papen to his office to be schooled in the way of his new and unpalatable work. “At the moment, my dear young lieutenant, we have desperate need of willing hands and stout hearts here in America, who are ready to stop at nothing for Germany, who will help the fatherland to win the war, for that it must. We have no time to waste, therefore let us get down to our business. You already know that . . .”, and Papen plunged deeper and deeper into schemes, figures and hoped-for results that sent a shiver down the newcomer’s spine. Back in Berlin he had heard many tales of the now famous Captain of Uhlans, but now, listening to the duties of his mission, coldly and calculatingly propounded by the Military Attaché who was under notice of recall because of his campaign of ruthless terrorism, he could not help but protest. “I say, sir, I came to America fairly well informed about my duties, but this—this, well, sir, I hardly like to say it—this is not the duty of an officer—I am asked to be a spy and what these Americans call a gangster.” Von Papen swept away his objections. “It’s not so frightful as you imagine,” he countered. “I came here before the war, at first feeling very much as you do now, but—duty is duty. We must serve the All Highest by every means in our power. We must stop at nothing to bring about a successful conclusion

of the war that has been forced—ahem!” the Military Attaché stopped short. There was no need to excuse the German cause to Ribbentrop, for, after all, he was a German officer and not a neutral American, to whom he had explained Germany’s innocent role so often. “But the Ambassador,” said Ribbentrop, little thinking then that he himself twenty years later would occupy that august office, “does he know?” “My dear fellow, he is also in the service of our Imperial Master. When I tell you that he is being talked of as a delegate to a conference at which we shall dictate our peace terms, then . . .” Papen adopted that confidential and conciliatory tone, which was later to become famous, and very soon had the young Hussar officer seeing eye to eye with him on the questions of the hour.

“Time is short,” continued von Papen, “for any day now will see my departure for Berlin, so allow me to introduce you to your future colleagues in this work, which must go on despite my absence.” And so Joachim von Ribbentrop, who was later to become a power in a new Germany, was initiated into his doubtful duties.

. . . . .

The next few days were occupied by von Papen in pursuing purely diplomatic routine. He was waiting for his “safe conducts” through the blockade zone from the French and British authorities. Ultimately they arrived, accompanied by the stipulations contained in the undermentioned letter, which incidentally disposes of the fairy tale that was built up around von Papen’s departure from American shores that he left clandestinely, travelling on a fake passport as a benevolent neutral.

Department of State.

Washington D.C.

December 15, 1915

MY DEAR AMBASSADOR,

I am advised by the British and French Ambassadors that safe conducts will be furnished to Captains Boy-Ed and von Papen for their return to Germany—it being understood that they will take the Southern route to Holland. The Ambassadors request information as to the vessel and date of sailing of the two gentlemen, which



I hope you will furnish at your earliest convenience. It is also understood that they will of course perform no unneutral act, such as carrying despatches to the German Government, etc.

I am, etc.,

ROBERT LANSING.

His Excellency J. H. von Bernstorff,  
Imperial German Ambassador.

Ignoring the paragraph politely requesting acquiescence to a diplomatic understanding that no despatches, *etc.*, were to be carried, a Secretary of Embassy replied:—

German Embassy  
J. No.A.8320.

Washington D.C.  
December 16, 1915.

MY DEAR MR. SECRETARY,

In the absence of the Ambassador, I beg to acknowledge receipt of your favour of yesterday regarding the safe conducts of Captains Boy-Ed and von Papen. I would feel greatly obliged if you were in a position to let me know whether—as requested in the Ambassador's letter of 10 December—the safe conducts will include the servants of the two gentlemen, Gustav Winko and Otto Malow, and whether the Russian Government is also ready to give it safe conduct.

It is understood that the successors of Captains von Papen and Boy-Ed, if sent here, will also be accompanied by servants.

I am, etc.,

HANIEL.

The Honourable Robert Lansing,  
Secretary of State,  
Washington D.C.

By the end of December 1915, Captain Franz von Papen, erstwhile Military Attaché at the Imperial German Embassy in Washington, had left America and was on the high seas, leaving behind him a trail of suffering and misery, with firmly laid plans for further disasters to be brought about in the new year by persons adequately paid and equipped to continue the nefarious work.

With von Papen's arrival in Europe a new chapter in his life was to open, but before that his carelessness was to result in apprehension, trial and confinement for forty

persons, all of whom had been directly or indirectly connected with him in his campaign of unrestricted terrorism.

While the vessel on which he was travelling put in at the port of Falmouth, officers of the British Intelligence Service boarded her and, possibly contrary to the rules of war (but by now the rules governing the relations between belligerents, and with neutrals, had long since been disregarded), a variety of documents, cheque counterfoils and paid cheques returned by his bank were extracted from his bag. These, when fitted in here and there with the information already in the possession of the Allied Intelligence Services, created a perfect picture, which displayed rather crudely the parts many suspects had played in the reign of terrorism and sabotage which had swept the United States.

Within a few weeks, many Germans mentioned in von Papen's cheque-book were either under arrest or were being hounded down; Rintelen was already in a prison camp; Trebitsch Lincoln very soon was arrested and sentenced, and many lesser fry also faced a judge and jury, with like results.

Incensed to breaking point, the United States demanded and obtained the recall of Count von Bernstorff, and with his departure diplomacy was thrown to the winds and America proceeded to stamp out the rot which had set in in her very heart.

The Zimmermann telegram<sup>1</sup> to the German Ambassador in Mexico proved that von Papen had done his work well and that the heavy expenditure of money and arms, carried out over nearly three years, was about to show results in Mexico.

Thus, the American nation was virtually at war with the Central Powers without a declaration. Mocked and jeered at by the German Press, the butt of Hindenburg's jokes at German Army Headquarters, Wilson pursued what has now become known as a Chamberlain policy. He was

<sup>1</sup> In brief, this announced unrestricted submarine warfare, an invasion of the U.S.A. by Mexico and an invasion of America's western seaboard by Japanese forces. America, for long fearing Japanese aggression, had had enough. This, coupled with other less important factors, induced America to go to war against Germany later in 1917. Zimmermann was the then German Foreign Secretary.

not ready to fight, so he followed a path of indignant armed neutrality, building up the American Army, Navy and Air Force, the while raising huge loans for defence and giving enormous facilities to the Allied Powers to raise loans on Wall Street, the bulk of which, it must be admitted, was spent on munitions and foodstuffs in America itself. Nevertheless, the purpose was achieved—the Allies were enabled to hold on, pending such time as America could come out into the open with force. That time came on 6 April 1917 when Wilson declared, in substance, that the various actions of Germany had forced the United States to consider itself free to look upon Germany as an enemy, and war was declared against the country most tied to the New World, next to Britain, by race and culture.

Following upon this the Federal authorities loosed their pent-up anger on all those saboteurs remaining in the United States. Thanks to a very substantial dossier compiled by British Intelligence, based almost in the main on those documents, letters and cheque-books “found” in von Papen’s luggage, a mass trial opened on 5 May 1917, just one month after America’s entry into the World War. The case, *The Government of the United States versus Captain Rintelen and accomplices*, created a world sensation.

Captain von Rintelen was extradited to America, contrary, many will claim, to the rules of war—for he was a prisoner of war—but the British still maintained that he was an alien found on British soil without permission. In the absence of von Papen, one-time Military Attaché, Rintelen became the focus of attention at the trial and, beyond all shadow of doubt, this German Naval officer, who has since renounced his German nationality, kept silent on many matters which would have disclosed, further, the hand of von Papen. As a German he deemed it necessary to remain silent on many matters—since the war he has made retribution by supplying many missing links in the story of the greatest large-scale sabotage campaign of all time.

Many names among the accused coincided with names found upon von Papen’s cheque counterfoils. Heavy sentences of penal servitude were imposed on all, and quite a number of the prisoners died from the “*White Death*” in

1918—Spanish influenza—which, it will be remembered, swept the battlefields of Europe with almost as great an intensity as the shrapnel and gas of the contestants.

So the remnants of the German guard of saboteurs in America were safely locked up behind bars, courageous men in the main, all of whom had been betrayed by the actions, careless or otherwise, of two of their fellow countrymen: Boy-Ed, who lost the codes, which von Papen continued to use, to the great delight of Admiral Hall at the British Admiralty, and von Papen, whose diplomatic training was so meagre as to lead him to think that, while he disregarded the conventions between nations, the British would not. His self-complacency *en route* to Germany via Holland must have been severely shaken when he learned of the unkind searching of his luggage, the luggage of a diplomat travelling on a safe conduct, by British agents. The safe conduct only applied to his all-important person. And yet von Papen was about the only German officer who could think and plan on the grand scale. The world was his canvas.

With the gates of American prisons yawning to receive his colleagues in the very near future, Franz von Papen set foot on the soil of his fatherland to receive the rewards whereof his exploits were deemed deserving by his Emperor—the Iron Cross and the Order of the Red Eagle.

## CHAPTER IV

THE opening month of 1916 found the Allies at bay against the Central Powers. General von Falkenhayn, Chief of the German General Staff, reviewed the situation to date and came to the conclusion, in his report to the Kaiser, that final victory could not be achieved by an offensive against Russia, Britain or Italy. He urged a huge offensive against France around Verdun, which was passed by the Kaiser, and recruits of the 1916 class were thrown against the French in a suicidal attempt to smash their resistance. Germany's effort was tremendous. Holding the Russians from Riga across to the Pripet marshes, maintaining a show of force in the Balkans and supporting the forces of the Dual Monarchy on every front, she yet was able to bring to the Western Front nearly 3,000,000 effectives supported by enormous artillery resources. While intending to launch a real offensive against Verdun and the Belfort gap, the German army opened what appeared to be a mass attack on the longer British line. Falkenhayn returned to old-fashioned artillery methods. He placed his light pieces practically side by side, hoping to blast his way through the British and, later, the French. Consequently, every available man was required by the German army in the West.

Having reported to the Foreign Office in Berlin, where he had arrived on 8 January 1916, Captain Franz von Papen, after short leave, became Rittmeister<sup>1</sup> in the First Guards Uhlan Regiment, and by the nature which the war had now come to assume, dashing cavalry tactics being a little out of place in the muddy trenches of Flanders, he was seconded to the 4th Prussian Foot Guards Division as an additional battalion commander.

<sup>1</sup> Captain of Horse.

He proved himself a good soldier. Despite his family position and wealth he did not turn into a champagne and dug-out officer; orders given by him were promptly executed. He proved that he was no pen-pushing office soldier, as his fellow officers expected he would be, fresh from the glittering pomp of a Military Attaché. In the late spring of 1916 he was appointed to the command of the 2nd Battalion, 93rd Reserve Infantry Regiment, later moving on to the 73rd Infantry Regiment. Following a spell around Lens as an infantry commander, he was then posted as General Staff officer to his old 4th Division of the Prussian Foot Guards.

On 22 August von Papen's division was thrown across the Somme and moved into position opposite the Schwaben redoubt near Thiepval, which latter position was being hotly contested, artillery fire raking it from three sides.

The summer of 1916 was very hot and the English attack was hotter. The English waves swept over and the 4th's flank was exposed by the loss to the British of Corselette. The division suffered a terrific loss in men, many raw recruits, that day and in an attempt to prevent a break-through von Papen quickly collected orderlies, clerks, batmen, pioneer squads and transport men and with them organized a counter-attack, which was successful enough to close the breach which was menacing the flank.

By 4 November the Guards Division had been driven back to a line a few miles south of Bapaume, and in ice and slush von Papen's division attempted a stand near Warlencourt. Then ensued a ding-dong battle carried over into the new year, which at the time was compared by the *Times* correspondent with the defence of the Rock of Gibraltar.

On 23 February 1917 von Papen's division moved into the Siegfried line.

Towards Easter the new German position in this area ran into a salient Arras-Bapaume, to which the Prussians had retreated to secure the protection of the ridge and the winding valleys in which to reorganize their reserves.

The 4th Guards Division had hastily constructed three great belts of wire entanglements covering the position,

and when the British broke over them, the Guards were still working on earth redoubts behind them.

The British having broken through on a front fifteen kilometres wide at Vimy, von Papen's division was hurried up to close the breach. This was a difficult task, because it must be remembered that the divisional commander did not have original Guardsmen, but poor material with little or no field service. The English appetite was also whetted by the advances after the months of reverses.

On this occasion it was von Papen's strategy which held the British by sheer mass counter-attack. For several months von Papen continued to serve in the 4th Guards Division, experiencing action in the Lens sector, which was not quite so comfortable as the office on Wall Street or the Embassy in Washington. He also had no Boy-Ed or Rintelen to interfere with his plans and his signal officer kept close guard over the code book.

. . . . .

Franz von Papen has never been lacking in personal courage. His recklessness is a form of courage; his work in America, mean and despicable though it appears, when viewed in cold blood, nevertheless called for the utmost courage—he was playing a dangerous game and some personal violence might well have been offered him by some of the more unscrupulous and rowdy elements he was forced to take into his employ and confidence. It is not easy for one to sit down in conference with a group of Sinn Fein labourers or Mexican bandit chiefs. Things have a habit of happening, especially when one has money and is known to be able to conjure up more, and when the conspirators are not always motivated by loyal aims, but mercenary thoughts. In America von Papen might well have expected the blow in the dark, but on active service he knew that the enemy was beyond the barbed wire and no-man's-land.

When a politician achieves prominence numerous legends around his war service gain currency.

The world has heard of heroes, actually just ordinary soldiers in the Great War, but on becoming Ministers

their deeds have been many; they have captured single handed whole platoons of English county troops and such brave deeds of derring-do, yet they have pleaded for leniency when brought before a political tribunal on charges of treason.

There is not much scope for a General Staff officer to display individual acts of courage, but an incident has been discovered, backed by the testimony of a simple German soldier, Ernst Dörfel, which is proof of Franz von Papen's personal courage. Dörfel says:—

“During the war I was in the reserve Infantry Regiment No. 93 and had fought with this unit from 1915 until 1918 in the front line. In June 1917 we lay in a very sheltered position near Mericourt hard by Lens, in that heavily bombarded area which brought such great losses to our troops. It was impossible to overlook the landscape. Our dugouts lay unfortunately in a declivity, and between the German and English positions ran a low chain of hills, which just could not be taken, owing to the enemy drum fire. ‘Tommy’ lay in a declivity on the opposite side of the hill—we could not see him nor he us. The position was untenable. Night after night our patrols went out and returned without success. Early on, the patrols returned nearly dead with strain and exhaustion. Later, not one man returned from patrols of three. We became more and more insecure. The feeling that we could not contact the enemy exasperated our officers to breaking point and volunteers were called for. Private Kortmann volunteered for the seventh time—he was the only lone patrol to have returned from the murderous British fire—and he persisted. His energy and eagerness to locate the enemy had become a by-word in the regiment. One night he failed to return. Our bitterness knew no bounds. Our company, the 12th of the 93rd Reserve Infantry Regiment, took an oath to revenge our comrade.

“When, on the next day, I was N.C.O. of the dugout on duty, and arrived at the left wing of my company, the forward listening post reported an English officer in front of the German lines. I looked through the glasses and at a distance of about six hundred metres I recognized



indeed a figure of what appeared to be an English officer, who had just moved away from the barbed wire on the right wing of our 2nd Battalion—he continued on into the English position.

“I knew that he would return. Feverish with excitement and fury I took away the rifle from the post and levelled it. I gave the soldier my binoculars. Tensely, we waited for the reappearance of the English soldier. Then he came, tall and lean in a green-grey raincoat, which we called *frog's skin* at that time, stalking through the outer wire. From the form of his steel helmet I recognized him at once as an Englishman. The first bullet I planted right in front of his feet. I altered my range to six hundred—I had shot too short before. Like lightning, the Englishman threw himself down and waited in a shell hole. Dead or alive we had to get him. We thought of our dead comrades, who night after night failed to return. I decided to aim to a hair's definition. But the Englishman was lucky—he threw himself into another shell hole. Altogether I sent eight bullets after the ‘Tommy’, but they all just sat on his heels. My company commander rushed up and tore away the rifle, shouting, ‘German officer on patrol duty.’ ‘Nonsense,’ I retorted, ‘in bright daylight, when even at night no one comes back?’ ‘Volunteer officer patrol,’ clipped my commander and marched away.”

The officer was Franz von Papen, General Staff officer of the 4th Guards Division, who had donned an English uniform in order to observe the enemy positions. Naturally, he relied upon his good English to get him through, if captured.

. . . . .

From 1915 until 1917 the great onslaught in the West was the centre of attraction. The campaign in the Near East enjoyed little publicity until the middle of 1917, when, peculiarly enough, changes in the enemy commands were brought about at roughly the same time, due, incidentally, to similar causes, weak leadership of the earlier commanders.

Trouble broke out between the Turks and the Germans.

Owing to the wastage of Turkish manpower in the Canal and Mesopotamia campaigns by von der Goltz, the Turks point blank refused to serve under German officers.

General Erich von Falkenhayn, the butcher of Verdun, having been relieved of his position as Chief of the German General Staff in late 1916, retrieved his reputation somewhat by his invasion of Rumania and in June 1917 took over command of the Turkish forces from Field-Marshal von der Goltz, who had forged the Ottoman forces into a weapon of war, in pre-war days.

The British General Maude continually outmanœuvred the German-officered Turkish forces operating along the Euphrates basin, and he so often anticipated the strategy of Falkenhayn that again the Turks, under Enver Pasha, refused to allow him also to waste their forces in both Mesopotamia and Palestine. German efforts in Palestine were beaten before any action started, for their methods appealed neither to Turk nor Arab. The Potsdam spirit was of little avail in the waterless desert, where the natives looked for supermen. The German military system could not stand against the easy-mannered yet strict British officers, who were the product of generations of experience in handling, with a minimum of force, tribesmen and fanatics. There was nothing wrong with the courage of the Germans; the fault lay in the system.

The Turks in their retreats reduced the surrounding countryside to famine, plundering and firing homes in their path. They were doughty fighters enough, but by now they had lost their interest in the fight, because they were fearful of conquering only to be enslaved to a wider German Empire in the East. Also the Turk could not be made to fight against the British with that same racial and religious ardour with which he fought the Russian. This probably was the main reason why all German commanders in Asia Minor were unable fully and immediately to benefit from the dissolution of the Russian army in the Caucasus after the Bolshevik revolution.

Tormented by thirst, bitten by mosquitoes whose sores were kept open by the everlasting fly, the pain aggravated by prickly heat, the British soldier in the Near East most

certainly did not regard himself as a hero, yet his exploits eclipsed those of the forces of Sargon and Alexander.

To this area in Asia, ravaged more by nature than by man, von Papen was transferred as a General Staff officer to the 4th German Osmanian Army whose commander was Falkenhayn, and which was being reorganized to prevent further differences of opinion with the Turks. Like the British in Asia Minor and the Middle East, the German troops suffered severe privation through the intense heat, insects, disease and shortage of provisions, to all of which they were unaccustomed.

Franz von Papen's transfer to the Turkish zone was not due to accident—that an officer was required and he was automatically sent. The reason for his selection goes deeper than normal army transfer, for Count Bernstorff had recently been appointed German Ambassador to Turkey after his enforced and undignified exit from Washington. Von Papen has always thought on the grand scale and for years a plan had been maturing in his active mind, ever since, in fact, the time when he left the Staff College in pre-war days.

In America, he had confided the gist of his plan to his chief, but in the bustle of their joint departures and the ordinary routine of duty, the scheme was pigeon-holed. Bernstorff, who was quite a brilliant man in many things, remembered the enthusiasm with which the young Military Attaché had put his plans up to him and he sent a memorandum in the matter to the Supreme Army Command, with the result that von Papen was invited by Field-Marshal von Hindenburg to commit his ideas to paper and to wait upon him at General Headquarters, with a view to amplifying points, where needed.

Thus it came about that while yet in France, in 1916 and 1917, the youngish Guards Staff officer, between attacks, was often to be seen riding back to General Headquarters in a special Staff car, where he would remain closeted with Hindenburg and Ludendorff for hours. His plan was adopted and while he was still on active service in Flanders, parts were put into operation.

What was this plan? Nothing less than the wholesale

disaffection of the Moslem race against the British; and for the purpose of this plan the feelings of many races not Islamic in origin were so played upon that they came to see themselves as such. There is no doubt that had the complete plan come to the full realization, British influence would have been completely destroyed and the German arms would have achieved world success. But, as history has proved, if von Papen could think on a grand scale, Britain had many men, unknown as soldiers, but famous as scholars, who were men of action. Their courage, cunning and calm manner, ably assisted by their erudite knowledge of the races with whom they had to operate, defeated the German intrigue.

It was not accident that caused the Sultan of Darfur to attempt an invasion of the Sudan in 1916 and to threaten the upper waters of the Nile; and the fanatical risings in Somaliland and Abyssinia about this time were directly attributable to an attempt to put the Papen plan into operation. From the moment the German General Staff had possession of the plan, coups were attempted in neutral lands and throughout the African and Asiatic continents, with the most fanatic, and, incidentally, fantastic, ardour. Franz von Papen, through committing his plan to writing, was possibly the first German in a really official and responsible position to articulate Germany's greatest ambition—one on which the Kaiser had long set his mind—German hegemony in the Near and Middle East. Von Papen, unlike the pundits of the merely Near-Eastern Empire school, had closely investigated the conditions under which a number of countries in Africa and Asia existed, and in each case he found two conditions common to all, which, he thought (quite rightly in theory, for it was not fair to expect him to anticipate the activities of a handful of English scholars, turned soldiers and leaders of legions), would prove a unifying bond between them all and a means of attachment to German interests.

Firstly, there was the question of the Moslem religion, with which fanatics had played in the past for military and political ends. This instinctively produces all kinds of reactions, yet kindred to the chief, which is always

opposition to the Christian countries of Europe. This solidarity cannot be said to be conscious (as witness the incessant tribal warfare among themselves), but it is a primary force which drives these children of the desert forward in their aggression against this or that European country for the time being. But, peculiar as it may seem, these races are apparently blind to the fact that an inciting nation stands just as much in opposition, if not more so, to their interests as the nation to whom, at the time of incitement, they have sworn friendship by treaty. In all questions of interference by individual European nations with these Eastern races, there is always present the condition that the East remains subject to Europe. It has been attempted so often that the Arab and related races have become, in the eyes of the contestant European overlords, as farm labourers who change their employment on Lady Day or Michaelmas.

That the Arabs and other Moslem races had begun, in 1916, to discern the tinsel on the European knights in shining armour, von Papen had overlooked, when preparing his plan. Only the offer of complete freedom would hold the loyalty of the Moslem. England offered it. Whether complete freedom has been achieved is not within the scope of this book, but I have said that they were children of the desert and parents often make light promises for the sake of peace and quietness.

Secondly, just as such countries as Palestine, Egypt, Afghanistan, Iran, India and various other Moslem countries are loosely tied together by the common faith, so politically they suffer the same disadvantage; not one of them really enjoys complete autonomy. Each country is dependent upon some European State, either by treaty of friendship, mandate or protectorate rights. Not one of them is powerful enough to force the country upon which it is dependent to give up its influence, its social, political, military and economic weaknesses preventing the vigorous adoption of such a national attitude.

Therefore, these countries continue to lean towards what they consider to be the strongest State or combination of States in Europe. As it is now in 1939, so it was at the

time when von Papen projected his magnificent plan of German expansion in the East—when he almost saw the Kaiser riding into Bagdad on a white charger.

Von Papen was sufficiently politically minded to know that while Egypt was technically an African country, it was in reality, by affinity with Islam, a Near East Power. Historically, Egypt has always turned towards Asia. Therefore, he reasoned, a determined attack on the Canal (as distinct from the desultory effort of the earlier days of the war) would impress the Egyptians with Germany's greatness, and he hoped thereby that the British would be, if not overwhelmed in a holy war, at least forced to evacuate the Canal zone and Egypt, thus surrendering her main Empire artery to the control of the Central and Ottoman Powers, with the result that the war would bring victory to the Powers holding the Canal.

Again von Papen was sadly lacking in a knowledge of British tenacity and ability to lead and influence Moslem opinion, for the very Moslem whom it was the intention of his plan to wean away from the British, as personified by Indian cavalry and Arab Legions, fought as hard as the British-born Yeomanry, line regiments and Dominion troops.

Yet to his credit it must be said that in the early stages of the operation of the plan, it came near to success, due in the main to the fact that Germany was the ally of Turkey, the outpost of Islam, and a strange fervour arose temporarily in the Near East, bringing in its train a rising pan-Asiatic feeling, which in the end became the Frankenstein of the plan. Islam was disgruntled, but it would not be seduced completely by Teuton promises.

While in America, von Papen had proved himself a thorough organizer, notwithstanding his own personal carelessness; and on arrival at the Capital of the Sultans he felt more at home than in the dreary shell-and-bullet-ridden trenches of Flanders. For three years he had been the real head of perhaps the largest espionage organization until then known in the world, with his agents reporting from Japan, Ireland, Mexico, Spain, South America and all the States of America. He thought big and acted on

the grand scale. Here, in Turkey, opportunity beckoned and he was not loath to follow.

Practically coincident with Franz von Papen's arrival in Constantinople for service with the Turkish Army, General Allenby took supreme command of the British forces in Palestine, and from that moment the Papen plan was doomed, yet force was on the side of Teuton and Turk. The breakdown of Russia had released tremendous numbers of Turkish troops from the Black Sea and Caucasus fronts and allowed of their use in Palestine and Mesopotamia, in addition to which the Turkish divisions which had been serving with the Austro-German forces in Galicia and elsewhere on contiguous fronts, were poured across the Bosphorus into Asia Minor. Thus reinforced in this battle zone, the Turkish Government acceded to the German High Command's request for a wider field of action in its area, to further the Papen plan in the East and to ease the situation on the Western front, because through the contemplated Palestine offensive Hindenburg and Ludendorff thought that the British would have to send whole army corps from France to support Allenby, for German Intelligence knew that Allenby, upon succeeding to command, had demanded more divisions of cavalry, infantry and brigades of artillery.

Germany could not afford to support Turkey with many men, but she lavished stores, munitions and money on the projected campaign, sending Falkenhayn and a General Staff, of which von Papen was a member, and a small force of picked men, which became known to the Germans as the Asia Corps and to the Turks as Pasha II.

Falkenhayn and Staff took over control of a newly organized Turkish Army Group F., which ultimately became known as *Yilderim*—the Asia Corps co-operating with *Yilderim* providing a cadre of superlative quality. Only men of perfect physique were drafted into Asia, and they were excellently adapted to stiffen an ill-trained army. The Corps was composed of only three infantry battalions, but it was very adequately equipped with

artillery, mortars, aircraft, wireless and mechanical transport.

There was von Papen, with a perfect pocket army to help move about, but for several months inactivity prevailed, owing to the problem of where *Yilderim* should be employed. The two principal Turkish factions quarrelled among themselves and both with their German allies. Enver Pasha and Talaat wanted its employment in Mesopotamia, while Djemel Pasha and Mustapha Kemal, the ablest of all Turkish commanders, refused to serve under a German, yet both wanted reinforcements to hold Allenby.

Falkenhayn and Papen visited the Palestine front and as a result a compromise was reached, which proved disastrous. *Yilderim* was divided between the two theatres of war, two divisions only moving to Palestine and seven being based on Aleppo, the Asia Corps (whose utilization would have proved very successful at this juncture) being sent back *in toto* to Constantinople in reserve.

Franz von Papen returned to Constantinople to concentrate upon his plans; meanwhile, between then and October, both the Turkish and British armies occupied themselves with preparations for the coming tussle, little or no fighting of importance disturbing the ominous calm that had set in over the opposing lines, behind which, however, feverish activity went on apace.

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In Constantinople von Papen found it quite impossible to keep all the threads of his ever-spreading net in his own hands and he requested collaborators trained in espionage and penetration into neutral lands. Consequently it was no surprise to him when one fine morning Lieutenant von Ribbentrop presented himself at the Hotel Pera, ready for duty.

Ribbentrop's return to Germany from America, after the breaking off of diplomatic relations, was as adventurous as any young officer could wish for. In America he had carried on where von Papen had been forced to leave off, and now the two men whom fate had selected, from among all the Germans, to collaborate on such immense plans,



settled down to work on a design which they hoped would bring victory to their cause and destruction to their enemy. They worked hard, but the fates were against them in that land of Kismet, for their actions only helped to bring about the final check resulting in British victories, the moral effect of which persuaded the Moslems that Edmund Allenby's name indeed, when rendered into Arabic, meant "Governor of the Lord".

Every rising in foreign countries contiguous to British possessions, engineered as a part of the Papen plan and directed from Turkey was ruthlessly stamped out and the British Intelligence anticipated every move—or so it seemed. As 1917 wore to a close the grand plan, which, it must be admitted, had seriously retarded Allied progress, faded out, and it was only after Allenby's entry into Jerusalem that the full scope of von Papen's scheme was uncovered.

Towards the close of 1917 he rejoined Falkenhayn, whose Army Headquarters were then in Jerusalem, and participated in the several major bloody battles that preceded the 4th Army's flight from the Holy City before Allenby's victorious Yeomanry. Falkenhayn's position daily became more desperate and his troops were fighting losing battles among the hills of Judea and Moab. When the British occupied Beth-Horon, only twelve miles from the gates of Jerusalem and incidentally the scene of Joshua's great battle with the five kings of the Amorites, von Papen's feelings must have been very mixed. The British were occupying all the holy places and soon Jerusalem, in which he sat as a member of the German Staff, must fall—to resist much longer was militarily impossible, short of a miracle, and miracles seemed not to be vouchsafed the Turko-German army, for Allenby had become the modern Joshua.

There was von Papen, just one of a handful of Germans, right in the heart of a nomadic population in whom passions were easily roused and in whose minds, at this particular moment, was stirring the thought that they had been misled, betrayed and cast adrift by the Teuton. The realization of the dream of the Berlin-Bagdad railway

became more and more remote. The nerves of the Germans in Jerusalem were at breaking point, the Staff vainly seeking means of strategy either to hold Allenby or to evacuate the position in good order.

After several days without rest, von Papen had just retired to snatch a few hours' sleep, before the bombardment which he expected in the morning, for Allenby was in Hebron, the city of Abraham the Friend of God—the city from which David launched his attack on Jerusalem—and von Papen, the good Catholic, was filled with foreboding. Bethlehem was taken and the Mount of Olives was occupied by Welsh troops.

Practically at the same moment as von Papen retired to rest in Jerusalem, the Holy City, Halifax in far-off Canada was wrecked by the explosion of a munition ship, the work of saboteurs who were the remnants of the Papen organization in the North American Continent. The death-toll ran into many thousands—more, in fact, than lost their lives in the defence of the City of David.

"Anyhow, we'll evacuate in good order," murmured von Papen to himself as he settled down to slumber, for the final plans were set for the late afternoon of the morrow.

"I say! Come on, turn out, the British are coming in!" von Papen heard a voice shouting, and rubbing his eyes, he saw von Ribbentrop rushing into his room. "For God's sake hurry!"

"What's this?" replied von Papen. "Look here, my dear fellow, this is no time for joking. You know I have been hard at it, and now with the chance to snatch an hour or two of sleep, you come in here with some tomfoolery about the British. You know the orders, damn it—we leave for the North to-morrow."

"I know," responded the younger man, "but the Turkish Council has beaten us to it. Behind our backs they've sent a parlementaire to parley with the British and they plan to surrender the city at noon, to avoid its destruction from bombardment. Even now they've moved all their troops to the East because the British have occupied the Western positions leading into the city."

"All right, let me get my things together, shan't be a minute," answered von Papen.

"There is not a moment to lose if you want to escape. Do you forget the cheque you gave to Paul König and don't you remember that you were convicted in your absence of complicity with him to blow up the Welland Canal? These damned Americans are sure to have passed the arrest order on to the British. If not, American liaison officers are with Allenby's army, so it's all up with you, sir, if you are caught," pleaded his young collaborator.

"But, my dear boy, I must dress and collect or destroy my papers," remonstrated von Papen.

"You have time to do neither," passionately declared Ribbentrop. "Do you really want to be made prisoner? For God's sake, hurry—come with me as you are."

And so von Papen hurriedly left his quarters, clad only in his night attire, leaving behind him his clothes and papers, clambered into a waiting G.S. wagon and left Jerusalem in the direction of Nablus, from where later he was to direct an attempt, which proved abortive, at a counter-offensive to recapture Jerusalem. And so the city which had seen David, Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, Pompey, Titus, Omar, Godfrey of Bouillon and Saladin as conquerers and which now beheld an upright English gentleman as its liberator, saw the last of the German arch-conspirator.

In the city which, for over two thousand years of recorded history, has been the centre of the battle-ground of nations; a mass of documents were discovered, left by the fleeing von Papen, which proved to be of the utmost importance.

The documents disclosed down to the finest detail the activities of the one-time Military Attaché. From these documents the British learned of his plot to blow up the Suez Canal, of his fomenting revolutionary and secessionist activities in nearly all British Colonies and Dependencies, that he had paid out monies to, and had been instrumental in the sending of munitions to, Sinn-Feiners in Ireland, and that he had carried on a regular correspondence with the renegade British Consular official, Sir Roger Casement.

This was indeed a rich harvest for the British Intelligence Service, and as a result Casement died at the hands of a

British executioner and over seventy major spies were arrested and either shot or thrown into prison, according to the magnitude of their activities. The discovery of these papers put an end to large-scale German espionage, and the Allies were reasonably free from the attention of enemy agents for the remainder of hostilities.

Upon first discovery of these documents, army Intelligence Officers with Allenby cabled London of their find and the telegraphed reply (it was war-time, it must be remembered) was couched in terms not at all flattering to the gallant Uhlan.

"Forward papers to London; if von Papen captured do not intern—send him to lunatic asylum."

That was British opinion of von Papen's ability at the time; let us see what the simple German soldier thought of him. A soldier who fought under von Papen's command in Palestine wrote in the local paper of Dülmen, an area in Westphalia in which von Papen has an estate:—

"I got to know Herrn von Papen in Palestine in 1917, where he was on the Staff of the Asia Corps. I was in the same Corps attached to signals. It was always the source of great pleasure when Herr von Papen had kitchen control, for then there was good and plentiful food available. Herr von Papen knew how to stop double shuffling by the kitchen scroungers and the cooks often found themselves up in the front line, as a result. He also listened to complaints, when well-founded, and he had a great and noble heart for the wounded, often visiting them, dropping a comforting and encouraging word here and there.

"Since the war, Herr von Papen has brought this love and care for the soldiers right into our life here in Dülmen. He has helped many ex-service men and their families in the difficult days of unemployment. Therefore, we soldiers hold Herrn von Papen faithfully in our hearts."

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After the Jerusalem débâcle Franz von Papen returned to Berlin to report to the Supreme Command—to a Berlin

already simmering with revolt, vocally led by the Social Democratic faction in the Reichstag and by bleatings for peace from Erzberger, the leader of the Catholic Centre Party, he, of course, taking his lead from Pope Benedict XV, following upon his address of August 1917 to the rulers of the belligerent peoples.

Benedict seemed impervious to the fact that for three years the Catholic priesthood in each belligerent land had been urging their flocks to cut each other's throats, with final prayers for the success of the arms of either side, according to where the priests were preaching.

The alleged universality of the Church seemed a mockery; the Papal peace appeal read like a brief in a Chancery action, with an eye on the main chance—payment and damages—a lot about equity and economics, nobility and tradition, but precious little about the blood flowing and the lot of the maimed, the widows and the orphans. It was left to Wilson to orchestrate this theme in his reply.

As the train was speeding towards Berlin containing von Papen and Ribbentrop, the former repeated his thanks for the early morning call and graciously admitted that such prompt action had undoubtedly saved his life, for he had had time in which to consider the little matter of König and the Welland Canal, among other things, just then exciting the great American public.

"I am deeply indebted to you, Ribbentrop—perhaps some day, who knows, I can wipe the slate. If ever I can redeem my debt I shall do so, in whatever the manner."

The time for redemption was some years off. Inexorably fate had begun the weaving, but it required other materials to complete the net. Meanwhile, the mad world could go its way.

Consequent upon the northward drive of the British forces in Palestine, the Turkish front contracted and von Papen was appointed as Chief of the General Staff of the 4th Turkish Army, with the local rank of Imperial Osmanian Colonel, early in 1918; thereafter remaining at the disposal of the Turkish High Command until the Ottoman Empire threw up the sponge in October 1918.

The German High Command had abandoned all idea of startling action in the East—Russia had been quietened (it was hoped) by the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and as a consequence of the rise of Bolshevism, Hindenburg was able to play his last card on the Western Front.

Franz von Papen could not hope for success for the German arms. His years of cunning planning, scheming and sabotage had brought no laurels to the German cause, and all further efforts seemed vain. As a soldier he continued to do his duty, the execution of which became purely mechanical. All that he could do now was to so devise the retreat in Asia Minor as to cause the maximum of annoyance and loss of man-power to the British, who were beginning to hope that a decisive blow would spread discontent among the Turkish populace, thus producing open revolt against the German taskmasters, with the result that the Turkish Empire would sue for a separate peace.

The failure of the Turkish counter-attacks brought Falkenhayn into disgrace and he was brought back to Europe. Von Papen stayed on and his new chief was Liman von Sanders, the spectacular defender of the Gallipoli Peninsula.

In April von Papen annoyed the British by a stroke with his Asia Corps, which drove the British troops temporarily into the Jordan valley. One battalion only of Papen's élite held and repulsed the British, the men fighting with a new determination and great courage. They had regained faith for a while in their Staff and by their bravery, steadiness and discipline did much to hold up the British advance, at the same time providing a backbone on which the heterogeneous Turkish forces rallied for some while.

This and later combats have passed into history with glory to both the British and German arms.

## CHAPTER V

CHRISTMAS 1918 found the world taking a breathing space from the conflict of four years, for peace had not yet come in Europe. The Armistice between the Central Powers and the Allies only meant that temporarily blood would not be shed, and several times leading up to the peace in June of 1919, the situation looked ugly, for there were elements on both sides still snarling between bared teeth.

The revolution, which had made the conduct of a war impossible for the German leaders, had caused them to sue for armistice and negotiations for peace. The Army went back to Germany and was partially demobilized, in every district a cadre of officers and men remaining on duty to assist the police in the maintenance of order. That was the intention in the arrangement arrived at by the Allies and the semi-revolutionary Government, but the result achieved was far removed from that. The Army became the rallying ground of all sections of the Right in Germany and the recruiting places for those roaming legions (*Frei-corps*) of volunteers who opposed the Bolshevik invasion in East Prussia and the Polish opportunists who sought to acquire as much land in the Silesian district as possible, before the Allied Council in Paris put a stop to their little tricks.

The senior officers who remained in the Army readily saw that under the new social conditions in Germany, it would become the ruler of the State—an *Imperium in Imperio*—and they would become powerful through it. The war was scarcely at an end, yet the military caste began forging the new weapon which was to rebuild Germany—the politically trained army.

Returning to Germany from Turkey, Franz von Papen found his country in a state of chaos, but he found little

to confirm the rumours that he had heard in Constantinople. Here was no ragamuffin defeated army fraternizing with rebellious workers, pillaging and destroying whatever came their way. He found that, for the most part, the terror was spread by the forces of the new Socialist Government itself, which had come to be afraid of the anger of the people they had incited to rebellion.

The main duty of the skeleton army in the Germany of 1919 consisted in keeping the peace through preventing it from being broken. Every town and village had its party for the removal of this or that hardship and many of them had become very militant, bringing annoyance, and often broken heads, to the more peaceful section of the community. Specially selected officers and non-commissioned officers, usually from distant commands, moved about among the people at these meetings with the obvious object of getting to know the ring-leaders, so that the authorities could deal with them accordingly.

The supervision of much of this type of work was von Papen's next line of service, for although technically still borne on the establishment of the General Staff, he had rejoined the 1st Uhlan Guards Regiment for regimental duties.

Although still a soldier, his estates and business interests had naturally to receive some of his time and attention and he, like all other members of the landed classes, was very perturbed, for the menace of expropriation came from the Ebert Government.

The Ebert Government was in a hole; it had to shoulder the blame for many things, mostly the legacies of the war-time administration. Something had to be done quickly, because the deputies of the Reichstag were quarrelling among themselves and could not come to a decision about the form the legislature should take—Soviets or National Assembly.

Finally, after stormy debates, a strong majority of late Reichstag deputies and new delegates of soldiers' and workers' councils decided against the Soviets and voted for a National Assembly and a Constitution. They pledged themselves "to work for the unity of the Reich" and to



ensure this unity their varied policies proceeded immediately to disintegrate the Empire by party growth and factionism throughout its states and provinces. The old institutions remained, to be used as administrative vehicles of the Constitution not yet drawn up.

The orderly manner in which Hindenburg had brought the German Army back into the country after the armistice had impressed the revolutionary leaders, and when he offered his services to the nation to assist the State in the preservation of order, none but a few thought that by that he meant the preservation of the rights of the ruling classes.

The landed classes breathed more easily and expropriation passed as a bad dream.

While von Papen cooled his heels in barracks and resigned himself to the direction of semi-police work in his district, his one-time assistant and rescuer in Palestine, Joachim von Ribbentrop, was serving as a military member of the German delegation at the Peace Conference in Paris; where his command of English and French, rather than his military knowledge, stood him in good stead and caused him to be favourably remembered by many influential persons in republican Germany. But he was to become more important in the Reich than just a mere individual in a delegation, although that delegation was in being to fight for a basis on which Germany might recover. He was not to know then that his late chief, von Papen, and he were later to play political swings and see-saws.

The middle-class idea of a Constitution pushed the Red bogey farther into the background, but it also produced conflict. The apparent liberality of Germany's new rulers attracted the "big men" of Industry and Business and they sat in the councils of the nation under some banner or other—most certainly not, in the earlier days of what the Germans called the "System", as National or Conservative members. This concentration of the middle classes in the control of the Reich did not at all suit the more advanced thinkers among the "revolutionaries", and they formed themselves under Liebknecht's leadership into the

Spartakist league, which aroused the masses in what promised to be a second revolution early in 1919. The Government, so new to office, could do nothing.

It could neither rely upon the Safety Guards (*Sicherheitswehr*) organized by the Police Department nor upon the troops attached to the military control in Brandenburg. Much less reliance could be placed upon the National Marine Corps, which had seized the Castle in Berlin, from which they could not be expelled. Even their own leader designated them "a gang of highwaymen". Berlin fell—Unter den Linden swarmed with many thousands of the rabble, many armed with a queer assortment of weapons, but the mob rule of the revolutionaries who had rebelled against their own revolution ended with the entry of the military into Berlin on 12 January. Within a week all was quiet and the first elections for the National Assembly were in full swing, and immediately afterwards Ebert was installed by election first President of the Empire—we would say Republic, but even the most ardent social reformer in Germany appeared to have use for the word "Reich". It was certainly most imposing!

The work of finally settling the Constitution still went on—delegates from all parties assisting in the drafting. When finished it was a bastard document. The earlier Constitution of the Kaiser had equal weakness, and what Bismarck said of the Constitution of the '71 Empire proved as applicable to that of the Weimar Republic: "It is imperfect, but it was the utmost we were able to accomplish."

The Peace Treaty had not yet been signed, and the Allies kept up the blockade of all German ports. With the demobilization of nearly ten million half-starved men from the Army, and repatriated Germans from overseas, the peace brought more want and privation than was experienced in war. On all sides there was a general lack of food, clothing and housing. The general condition of the country, with no internal purchasing power and no export trade, rendered impossible the absorption of these returning nationals into any form of employment. The difficulties under which the German Nation laboured were legion.

The rulers had sowed the wind; it was reaping the whirlwind.

Political life literally ran to waste. "Where statesmanship is stagnating, demagoguery is in flower," Friedrich Engels, the father of German Socialism, had written, and his disciples in Berlin set out by their own acts the truth of this dictum.

The revolutionary feeling was not yet quiescent and we have a picture of the revolutionaries toiling in Goethe's fair city of Weimar behind barbed-wire entanglements, and guarded by machine-guns against the attacks of those whom they had caused to revolt, and who now in return rebelled against their "deliverers" from the "claws" of the Hohenzollern. Mass strikes, political murders, and street fighting became the running commentary of existence in Germany.

The war profiteers were ably succeeded by the usufructuaries of the "People's" revolution and by the greed of the operators of the inflation.

So-called volunteer corps sprang up everywhere, particularly in the east and south-east, attracting those adventurous spirits who could find no release in the peace. Many were used as the hirelings of interests to further doubtful causes. Others were just wandering marauders and murderers. Quite 60 per cent of these auxiliary military formations were orderly, and without their use, they for the most part being seasoned troops, the Poles, who grew audacious in their newly-found liberty, and the Russians, would not have been checked in their westward advances through the Prussian marshes and the Silesian coal-fields.

The good solid German soldier, peasant and workman was being promised the Golden Age, more wages, more leisure, and less work, by groups whose only intention was power. The old, old cry. Meanwhile the Allies were demanding their pound of flesh at Versailles. Money to be paid by way of reparations was talked of glibly by all, and the millions rolled off the lips of the German delegates as easily as from those of the conquerors. The people would pay anyhow.

As if by a magnet, the personalities who were later to become prominent in the construction and direction of the Third Reich were drawn together, although in 1919 none of them realized the role they were all to play.

Von Ribbentrop, his duties in Paris at an end, was stationed in Munich and to him fell the duty of observing the various growing parties and attending their meetings, in civilian clothes, of course. While thus engaged he was fortunate enough to fall in with an intelligent non-commissioned officer who hated Communists and who was itching to bring the "November" revolution to an end.

The presence of a German officer was always scented by the revolutionaries, despite the "disguise" of civilian dress, and von Ribbentrop, taking the advice of a fellow officer, Lieutenant Alfred Rosenberg, deputed the intelligent non-commissioned officer to attend and report the meetings. He did his work so thoroughly that he was personally thanked by the Garrison Commandant for his clear and intelligent reports. The N.C.O. was Adolf Hitler, who has maintained that it was the young lieutenant Ribbentrop who set his feet towards a political career.

The Peace Treaty was signed and life in Germany began to return to such normality as the disturbed economic conditions allowed. The German Government, instead of proceeding with the work of rehabilitating its trade and industry, which it left to its ex-enemies, England and America, to do for it on a magnificent scale, adopted the whited-sepulchre attitude—a committee of the Reichstag was formed to examine evidence and witness in an attempt to discover the reason why Germany lost the war. It seemed to forget that the ex-Allied Powers were pressing for another tribunal to examine and condemn certain German gentlemen who tried to win the war by criminal offences against international law and morality.

Among other German diplomats and officers, the Reichstag Committee examined Count Bernstorff and Herrn von Papen. Their activities in America were discussed, and from the minutes of this committee, it appears that both Bernstorff and von Papen were unanimous in laying every particle of blame on their several co-saboteurs, the Naval

officer von Rintelen being accused by both as a clumsy amateur. The evidence given seems to carry the implication that neither the ex-Ambassador nor the Military Attaché had any love for the Naval officer who was, for such a short while, attached to the military wing of the German Secret Service and who was, at the time of the sitting of the Committee, safely locked behind bars in Atlanta gaol in America. As a result of this evidence, von Rintelen, on his liberation a few years later, found very few friends in Germany and his demand for an enquiry into his case was refused.

One of the first acts of the Republican Government in 1919 was to declare a general amnesty for all political and military prisoners and for all those against whom disciplinary action was pending. Lieutenant von Ribbentrop was about to stand his trial for being absent without leave from his unit on active service, but upon the introduction of the amnesty law, his case was dismissed.

Now Ribbentrop was no ordinary deserter. It will be remembered that he arrived in the middle of the war, on secret mission, in America. As in all such cases his tracks were so covered that not even his commanding officer knew his whereabouts, and upon his return to Germany after America's entry into the war, conditions were so abnormal that the necessary minute at the War Office was not notified to his unit, either through the stress of the campaign or some negligence on the part of a record clerk, and he remained "absent without leave".

This arbitrary dismissal of what would have remained a permanent stigma on his military reputation, was not at all tasteful to von Ribbentrop, who had no wish to receive favours from a "Red" Government, so he applied to the War Office for a trial of his case. The War Office politely refused his request on the grounds that it had no power to reopen the matter, since a matter dealt with by a general amnesty would have no standing before a later convened tribunal.

Resourceful von Papen, however, found a way out of what, for a German officer, was an untenable position. Within a very short while after the War Office refusal

to grant a trial, a Military Court of Honour had been arranged and a jury of officers empanelled to consider the merits of the case. Franz von Papen addressed the Court on the service rendered by von Ribbentrop in America and later in Asia Minor, while under his own personal command. The Court and the jury knew of von Papen's friendship with Hindenburg and suddenly remembered that von Papen had been a member of the General Staff. The verdict of the Court was returned.

"This Court of Honour duly and properly convened, finds that during the war Lieutenant von Ribbentrop conducted himself in exemplary fashion, and under superior orders rendered such services to his country that had the war not terminated prematurely, he would have, beyond all doubt, merited a high Imperial decoration and distinction."

Von Papen was beginning to repay his debt to von Ribbentrop.

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The period of transition from war to normal times over, von Papen retired from the German Army on 3 November 1919, with the usual permission to wear the prescribed uniform.

Unlike many ex-officers, who had no income but their Army pay, and who were therefore derelicts in Germany's post-war social life, he enjoyed a large income from investments and land and he could retire into country life without fear of the future.

The result of the war had brought to him, as to most other Germans, shock and bewilderment. His world had tumbled about his ears and the peace of his country estate in Westphalia, to which he went on leaving the Army, gave him a fitting environment in which to adjust his ideas of values.

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Franz von Papen had never lost contact with the wealthy district in which he and many of his ancestors were born, and in the immediate post-war period his time was taken up with the development of his estate and agricultural interests at Dülmen.

The Papen family had lived at Haus Merfeld, that old Merode Castle in Merfeld, near Dülmen, for centuries, and the old brick building with its saddle-back roof imbued von Papen with the hope that the days of stress were over and he settled down to the life of the country squire, content to leave the squabbles of Berlin in other hands.

The real distress in Germany passed him over, for he was still a privileged person—the feudal-like atmosphere of his own corner in Westphalia had remained unchanged—with the peasants remembering the young master and touching their caps and the village maidens curtsying as the master with his lady went by. Even the occasional visits to Berlin or to the Rhineland cities did not bring home to him the real state of affairs in the country at that time, for with money to spare, he either stayed in the first-class hotels, where the staff would call him Herr Oberst, or with friends in the West End.

At home then he was the von Papen, the present member of a family rooted in the land for centuries, conservative to the backbone and who could be nothing other than a Conservative. But, had he been like many of the other young officers who were thrown upon life, to fend for themselves, without money, influence, work or hope of work, he would probably have drifted into the ranks of the Socialist intelligentsia or joined one of the freebooter corps, ultimately joining up with the Hitler movement and becoming a thorough-going Nazi. Only accident of birth and the possession of a well-invested fortune, much of it in foreign lands, prevented him from becoming the prophet of a revolutionary movement, because in culture and address he could have outshone the rather shabby lights which were shining during the early post-war period in Germany.

With the depreciation of the mark, the agrarian population of Germany took on a new importance and with it came a prosperity known previously only by the industrial class. In the years 1920 onwards Franz von Papen became the practical farmer; his horseflesh was good to gaze upon, his crops were of the finest and he came to earn the respect of his tenant farmers and peasantry, worthy to be the “new

young master ". Whenever an agriculturist had a grievance he took his case up with the Ministry of Agriculture, until gradually he became looked upon as the champion of Westphalian agricultural interests. He became President of the Farmers' Club and it was from there that his interest in politics began to develop. The Farmers' Club was the provincial beginning of the *Herrenklub* in Berlin, and it provided von Papen with experience in the handling of political and economic problems and in the ways of the electorate.

When Franz Seldte formed the *Stahlhelm*, the league of ex-service men, von Papen became a member. The *Stahlhelm* was led by men with extreme Nationalist, if not Monarchist, leanings, and after a year or two rustivating in Westphalia, von Papen became active in politics, for he saw the light of a new Germany faintly glimmering. The Inter-Allied Commission in Germany was behaving in a manner contrary to all German expectation, carrying out its investigation and control with a very light hand. It appeared that the victors were not too friendly with each other, France playing up the old idea of revenge and England and America adopting the "old school tie" attitude of never hitting the other fellow when he is down. England and America were both anxious for Germany to get on its feet commercially, and through all this von Papen began to realize that he was still a young man at forty, with a wide experience of the world and possessed of wealth. He could yet live to see another Germany rise from this horrible Socialism of Ebert and Scheidemann.

In Westphalia there had always been a strong Centre tradition among the nobility and lesser landed classes, which went back to the time of Bismarck's *Kulturkampf*. Then the Westphalian nobility assumed the leadership of all German Catholics in the Centre Party, which was formed in 1870 with the object of defending the liberty of the Church and maintaining the elementary schools; but it had a more material reason—to oppose the Liberals who were encouraged by Bismarck to attack the seignorial rights of the great landowners.

In the first Reichstag of Bismarck's Reich, the Bishop



of Mainz, Freiherr von Ketteler, defined the task of the Centre Party as being to provide the Catholics with the right that "being neither led astray nor diminished even in the new Germany", they should be able to live in accordance with their faith, and not be dependent upon the caprice of a hostile majority. When the Vatican council declared the infallibility of the Pope in matters of faith and morals, the German Bishops bowed to the decree; many university professors refused to recognize the idea of infallibility and the Centre demanded the removal of the doubters. Bismarck regarded this as an attempt on the State from without and he gave the Liberals full support in attacking the Centre, with the result that the schools were freed from Catholic control, the State being given also the right to prohibit the appointment of priests, to prescribe the education of clergy in German High Schools and Universities, and it finally deprived the Pope of criminal jurisdiction over the clergy in the Reich. An Imperial law was passed forbidding the clergy to attack the State during divine service, and the expulsion of the Jesuits was decreed by Imperial ordinance. The moral of the *Kulturkampf* was "State and Church must come to an understanding".

The Centre Party, originally founded by men of Conservative outlook, grew rapidly and became in the 'eighties a Party of the discontented masses, acquiring more than a hundred representations in the Reichstag. The agriculturists, who up to the 'seventies had voted preponderantly Liberal, looked gradually to the Centre Party to represent their class and to protect their interests, and so gradually the Centre took on two distinct colours, and in post-war Westphalia it was always Conservative, while in neighbouring Rhineland a strong Liberal tendency was noticeable. Franz von Papen was automatically drawn into membership of the Centre Party because, first of all, he was a Catholic and it seemed the obvious Party for him, and what was perhaps more important, he was a very close friend of Geheimrat Herold, himself a strict conservative farmer who owned and cultivated large tracts of land, the leader of the Westphalian section of the Party.

In the Prussian Diet elections of 1921 von Papen was elected a Centre deputy for Westphalia, the votes of the agriculturists and peasants giving him a mandate to watch over and fight for their interests, which were also his own, in the Assembly of Lutheran Prussia. He joined that company of Junkers and upper-middle-class Germans who saw, in the weakness of the Socialist régime and the lack of political experience of the Ministers, a grand chance to rebuild the old caste system in a Nationalist Germany.

He became a leading opponent of the policy of fulfilment of the Treaty of Versailles; he refused to believe that Germany was in tradition and outlook suited to this international Democracy on the French model. He had not forgotten his early training and he, believing in German greatness, stuck to the idea that Germany had a cultural and religious mission in Europe. All of which one would like to believe to be sincere, but while so far he had done much, however discredibly, to achieve something towards greatness and supremacy for Germany, that behaviour belied the cultural and religious side of his creed.

The German problem was National and not International. He believed, in opposition to the Socialist intelligentsia and enthusiasts of a policy of pacifism, who believed in a policy of collaboration with the Western Powers, that all National forces in the Reich should be collected together in one common front and, through this unity, break the stranglehold exercised by the ex-Allied Powers. Nationalism was von Papen's creed and a National Germany became his aim.

He maintained as early as 1920 that "only through collecting the splinters of the Nation and bringing them into the centre kernel of the German Reich" could German future be assured. That sounds like Adolf Hitler in 1930, but at the time von Papen was persuading many Germans to rally to Nationalism with this argument, the leader of the National-Socialist Party was finding it difficult to raise enough money to pay the rent of the halls and beerhouses in which he held his meetings.

This Nationalism brought von Papen into bad odour with the Centre Party, particularly with the Left section,

which was more powerful numerically than the Conservative wing, which of course supported von Papen. During the early years of von Papen's political life he had to lean more and more on Geheimrat Herold, whose word was law in the Party, for he enjoyed the respect and goodwill of the masses in Westphalia and the Party relied upon him to whip up the votes at election times, which in post-war Germany came round with the punctuality of the public feast days.

With Herold to protect him inside the Party from attacks of its left wing, he was free to concentrate upon the gathering into a National front of all those elements, Junkers, Industrialists and politically-minded Generals, whose trust he so abused in the years ahead.

Several years of German history passed him by and he remained just a member of the Prussian Diet—a political cypher.

The left wing of the Centre Party supplied Germany with more and more Ministers, including Chancellors, and von Papen's friends began to suspect him of being tainted with the same view, but he remained impervious to their criticisms.

He openly quarrelled with the Chancellor Wirth and was threatened with ejection from the Party, but the peasants of Westphalia rallied to his side and the executive of the Party could not risk the antagonism of a whole section of its parliamentary supporters.

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The abortive Hitler putsch in Catholic Bavaria in November 1923 proved to von Papen that the time for reaction was not yet ripe. The policy of passive resistance in the Ruhr had shaken world confidence in the German Republic and the inflation that followed made domestic politics more complicated. But it was all leading to the time when Nationalism must prevail, thought von Papen; and that time came sooner than most thought.

On 28 February 1925 Friedrich Ebert, President of the German Republic, died and the 25 April was announced as the date for the new Presidential elections. The dis-

unity among the Germans was glaringly portrayed by the nomination of no less than nine candidates.

The Centre Party, Social Democrats and Democrats put forward the former Chancellor, Wilhelm Marx, a Catholic, a sound and honest politician with years of experience behind him, a capitalist and one calculated not to lead the young German Republic into any foreign adventures.

In conjunction with a variety of Conservative interests, Franz von Papen formed what came to be known as the *Reichsblock*, a purely temporary electioneering group, and it nominated as its candidate Field-Marshal Paul von Hindenburg, Germany's war-time Supreme Commander. The way to a Nationalist Germany was opened.

In putting forward Marx as a candidate, the Centre Party had to enter into a coalition with the Social Democrats and the Christian Trade Unions, and it would have had to rely upon the *Reichsbanner*, the private army of all those parties which supported and sought to maintain the Constitution. This would have meant a continuance of Left supremacy in the management of the Reich.

In the various parties of the Reich there were many influential men who thought like Papen and to these he made the suggestion of nominating Hindenburg for the Presidency, against his own Party's candidate. The leaders of the German People's Party—men like Hugenberg, the great industrialist, film magnate and press lord—were willing to assist in financing Hindenburg's election campaign if there was any real chance of success, for they too saw the utility of such a distinguished figurehead around which Nationalism could be built.

Stresemann, the Foreign Secretary, while expressing admiration for the Field-Marshal was doubtful of world reaction, for he saw his peace policy endangered and Germany regarded with suspicion, to say the least. The next consideration was the feeling of Hindenburg himself in the matter. When approached by a deputation of Nationalist leaders he gave a determined "No!" to their suggestion and many former colleagues of the General Staff obtained no better satisfaction. "I am no Party

man," boomed the hero of Tannenberg, "and I do not wish to be." The Field-Marshal also did not want a repetition of the last election, when Ludendorff stood as a candidate and his partisans declared that Ludendorff, and not Hindenburg, was the real hero of the World War; that Ludendorff and not Hindenburg was the real victor of Tannenberg. Admiral von Tirpitz called upon the Field-Marshal and told him point blank that it was his duty to allow his name to go forward. Later, on a purely social occasion, von Papen remarked to the Field-Marshal that the whole Nation looked upon him as the last elder of the Nation—every ex-soldier would vote for him. After obtaining a release from his Military oath to his Kaiser, Hindenburg finally consented to become a candidate for the chief post in the German Republic.

The election campaign in full swing, von Papen was threatened with expulsion from the Centre Party for the part he had played in assisting to secure the Field-Marshal's nomination and for his refusal to recognize the sponsored candidate of the Party itself, Marx. At the time it was a minor sensation in German political life, but the wily Papen had many strings to his bow in the Party, the strongest one of which was the huge agrarian vote influenced by him. He was also on very friendly terms with the Field-Marshal and the Party functionaries were not quite sure about the result of the elections—so Papen rode the storm.

Despite the beating up of ultra-patriotism by the *Reichsblock* organizers, and the almost legendary appeal of the personality of the Field-Marshal himself, he was elected to the Presidency by only a very narrow majority, polling 14,639,395 votes compared with 13,653,642 votes registered in favour of Marx.

The effect was electric. The Parties of the Weimar Constitution were shocked beyond measure—war was imminent—the Kaiser would return—Hindenburg was only the viceroy of the Hohenzollern and so on, while the foreign Press joined in a doleful chorus in its view of the future. In immediate politics their prognostications were wrong, but taking the long view we can see how truly their views apply to the position of Germany to-day.

The Paris *Temps* said that the presence of Hindenburg in Bismarck's Palace was a challenge to the Allies, to Europe and to America, for in him were embodied all the powers of reaction and brutal revenge, which now hoped for a swift restoration of Germany's military power, while *The Times* mentioned that Hindenburg's election was disturbing to a policy of co-operation among the powers and the majority of the German people had misunderstood the true National interests when they gave their votes to Hindenburg. The *New York Herald* concluded its opinion on the situation created by the result of the German Presidential election thus: ". . . but the most profound reason for this choice is to be sought for in the mentality of the Germans. Hindenburg appeals to their National Pride." The *Morning Post*, at the time famous for its own ultra-nationalism, wrote: "Hindenburg embodies the German Empire. His election as President of the German Republic is the gravest event in world politics since the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. . . ." and concluded by calling for a Franco-British-Belgian military alliance against Germany. The *Svenska Dagbladet* remarked: ". . . the German people, in spite of the frightful catastrophe which they have experienced, have not yet surrendered."

Party interests, proprietorial policy and a desire to satisfy the public's craving for sensationalism often guide the pen of the journalist, but what a sensational front page would have appeared if von Papen's name had then been linked with several others in the story "How Hindenburg was persuaded to accept nomination".

Certain Democratic circles in Germany were also as scared as the foreign Press, but time marched on and the aged Field-Marshal appeared to settle down and pursue the duties of a figurehead of State. But his presence at the head of the German State was the signal for the rallying of all Nationalist sympathies in the Reich against the "system".

Hindenburg had played the role of soldier-adviser to his Imperial Master for long and arduous years; now, unbeknown to himself (and he would have strenuously denied it) he had undertaken the role of a twentieth-century John the Baptist, who had come to prepare the way.

In the conduct of the complicated lives of Nations, history shows that it is not intention—that forms future policy; it is what succeeding statesmen can make out of a situation created by a predecessor.

By now the Nazi Party had spread throughout the Reich and had come to be looked upon as a growing force of the Right and a weapon in the hands of the Nationalists. Von Papen, at this stage, by his support of Hindenburg against his own Party candidate, made of him the key with which the Nazis were enabled to open the door to power in the Reich. Unwittingly there began an invisible collaboration with Hitler, for any President other than Hindenburg would in due time have dissolved the National Socialist movement as an enemy of the State—that is to say of the Weimar Republic—which it set itself out to destroy.

The Nationalist movements in Germany looked to Hindenburg to denounce the Republic and declare himself a regent of the Monarchy, but he would have none of it. What justification is there, then, for asserting that Hindenburg was the key to Nazi success? Just this! That Hindenburg was an Army man and therefore understood the ways of soldiers. Many brilliant war leaders had been attracted to Hitler's banner. Hindenburg was also a Junker and he saw men like the Duke of Coburg, the ex-Crown Prince, several Princes of Prussia, General von Epp, Duke Ludwig of Bavaria, Prince Guido Henckel-Donnersmarck of Rottach, and many ex-Ambassadors, either actively joining up with the Nazis or backing them heavily with finance. Hindenburg was a lover of Germany and had served it, boy and man, in its most brilliant years. Hitler had promised to rebuild Germany into the Third Empire. What more reasonable thing to suppose than that the Field-Marshal would naturally have a soft spot for any movement, led by any German, which promised to rebuild the glories of his country.

Therefore it will be readily seen that the stage was set better under Hindenburg's régime for a movement, having in its title "Nationalist" as well as "Socialist", to expand.

In the high summer of 1925 Hindenburg was President of the Reich; von Papen was a member of the Prussian Diet and a Centre deputy in the Reichstag and it annoyed him to find that of all the Catholics in office, not one was a Nationalist. The left wing of the Centre Party remained the prop of Republican Germany. The Government of Bauer in 1919 was kept in office through four Catholic Ministers holding a balance, while succeeding Chancellors like Müller, Fehrenbach, Wirth, Cuno and Stresemann all used the support of Catholic Ministers to bolster themselves against the attacks of the extreme Left.

Statesmanship seemed a lost art and the time of most Ministers was occupied in meeting attacks to overthrow them. The Centre Party turned from Conservatism to a form of Socialism, thus breaking its traditional role. The multiplicity of Parties and the constantly changing Governments made legislation difficult of permanence and contributed in considerable measure to the reckless manipulation of finance, trade and social services, which resulted in the inflations and the ultimate economic crash in 1930-31.

The Centre Party, still remembering something of its Catholic mission, made vain endeavours to bring about a Concordat between the Vatican and the Reich, and in these attempts they were supported by the Papal Nuncio in Berlin, Monsignor Pacelli, now the occupant of the Holy Chair. Why these efforts failed no one can tell, except perhaps the Nuncio himself, who was and remains a diplomat, as well as a priest. Failure was not due to lack of interest and sympathy from Rome, because Pope Pius XI, it will be remembered, severely criticized the Allies in 1923 for occupying the Ruhr, which gave the Centre Party added prestige in the Reich, because the masses thought that it could rely upon it to cause the Pope to stand up to further attempts at the coercion of Germany by the ex-Allied Powers.

Franz von Papen was by now convinced that the Centre Party must be reorganized to line up to its responsibilities as a leading Party for the creation of a new Nationalist Germany. At first he thought of forming a Catholic Conservative Party and breaking with the Centre. On



reflection, however, he decided to work within the Party and he formed a Conservative group, which was in agreement with the original objects of Ketteler and Windhorst (the founders of the Centre in the days of the *Kulturkampf*), but whose interests were more material than spiritual.

To further this Conservative idea he acquired a substantial interest in the Catholic newspaper *Germania*, becoming chairman of directors and so influencing the editorial policy that protests came from the Centre executive. It was maintained that he was so altering the policy of the paper that soon it would pass out of recognition as a reliable Catholic journal, to which he naïvely retorted that he was "doing nothing else but filling the paper with Conservative ideas in order to give the Centre Party a turn to the Right".

Another post-war German movement of which von Papen was a prime mover was the circle of clubs throughout the country, known as *Ring der Herrenklub Gesellschaften*, and the main club in Berlin's Voss Strasse became a Germanic super-Carlton Club, from which the real destinies of Germany came to be directed between 1925 and 1932.

In these surroundings von Papen was able to do more for the achievement of his Nationalist ideas than he could in the Diet or the Reichstag, for here were men all of a like kind, ex-Ambassadors, Generals, coal-owners, steel magnates, east Elbian squires and men of the Colonel Blimp type. In the *Herrenklub* he was able to reign supreme, for the ex-diplomats were inclined to overlook his war-time blunders and regard him as a great strategist—a General Staff officer, while the Generals, who had not heard of his Staff work, regarded him as a brilliant diplomat.

The new National Germany was born in this island of influence and wealth, while its real governors were still fighting in the streets of every German city clad in breeches and brown-shirts, bearing the sign of arya—the selected one.

In this club and through the pages of its organ, *The Ring*, the new "Holy Western Roman Empire of the German Peoples" was born, based upon what von Papen always insisted in calling his "*sacrum imperium*" idea. He

developed the thesis of a new German Empire which would be heir to at least, if not more, the lands of the Holy Roman Empire, put out of business by Napoleon after it had lingered for several centuries in a state of advanced bankruptcy. He spoke of a new revolution which would restore the German socially and spiritually, but he meant a return to absolutism of the ruling classes with the medieval power of the Catholic Church to awe the masses into subjection.

In his advocacy of this new realm he said that he was opposed to collectivism and would fight against all mechanizing of the life of the citizen. He used the Centre to attack the Centre, and his theological arguments were sound if they had only been but serious.

It is difficult to imagine a greater abuse of political Catholicism than von Papen's arguments and actions for the building of what he promised his followers would be the Holy Reich of the Germans. Stripped of all its canting verbiage, he was promising the Germans in those years leading up to his Chancellorship, much more than Hitler had till then ever dared to promise—he said that the new Holy Reich would embrace all those who lived between the Baltic and the Adriatic and from Gaul to the distant Ukraine. Through the centuries, von Papen contested, the German nation had fulfilled its mission in colonizing and civilizing the four corners of the world, but it had not coalesced—now was the coming time to profit from this early pioneering.

Now much of this seems familiar, yet it lacks the Hitler touch. During the first decade in Republican Germany many writers took upon their shoulders the task of writing heavy philosophical tomes which encouraged those who wanted to, to hope for coming greatness, and, strange as it may seem, most of these works achieved prominence as best sellers, outstripping famous novels in their astronomical sales figures. One such a writer was Moeller van den Bruck and his outstanding work was entitled *Das Dritte Reich* (the Third Reich), and von Papen admits that his views were shaped by this man's work. In fact it is more than probable that van den Bruck was the first to apply the

term Third Reich to the conception of the State which was to follow the Weimar Republic.

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Friendship with Hindenburg ripened and von Papen became one of the "Palace clique" around the old man who ruled Germany because it was his duty. Hindenburg came to learn of only those things which were considered necessary to enable him to show an intelligent knowledge of affairs to any distinguished foreigner with whom he might come in contact. Quarrels over which flag was to fly from Embassies abroad excited him more than the rising tide of Communism in Germany, although to him everything that he could not understand was "Bolshevism". Whenever another Minister was to be appointed he enquired, querulously, "Is he another Catholic?" Therefore it is surprising that von Papen, the Catholic politician and landowner, was able to come so close to him. The Imperial Officer Corps bound the old régime closer together than did religious denomination and Hindenburg saw in Papen, first the officer and then the Catholic.

While industrial distress increased, the Parties in the Reich multiplied, each offering to the bewildered electorate a panacea for all its ills, and the Hitler movement gained more and more seats in the Reichstag and in the various Landtags or Diets in the States. The Army looked on, but did nothing to curb the power of the *Sturmabteilungen*, the ever-increasing army of the Nazi movement.

The political Generals of the Reichswehr knew that it must encourage the idea of the Burgher army, for it could not afford to face a future war with unsympathetic elements in the rear. The Reichswehr knew how to keep aloof from the bickerings of the State, and it showed, on one particular occasion, without any equivocation, that it would not tolerate interference with the State. During the Chancellorship of Müller, the Reichstag sought to compel disclosure of the Army budget and further to subordinate the Reichswehr to the parliament of the German Nation, by creating a parliamentary Secretary of State for the Reichswehr Ministry. Which does not seem an unusual

suggestion, coming from a democratically elected republican country. But the Army and its friends in the Reichstag would have none of it. No interference with the Army. Excitement rose high and a Presidential crisis threatened.

Von Papen pointed out that it was impossible for Hindenburg to be head of a parliamentary army and between Hindenburg, a certain Major Kurt von Schleicher and himself a scheme was thrashed out, which, when completed, appeared to give the Reichstag the control it sought, whereas, in fact, it took all power completely away from it. At this time von Schleicher was political liaison officer at the German War office and had, without many noticing it, become the soul (we would say the evil genius) of the Reichswehr. He was frequently to be seen with von Papen in the *Herrenklub* or in the lounge of the Reichstag or Prussian Diet. By their nature these two were drawn together and became the arch conspirators of the Reich. Both were brilliant in their way, but their own valuation of that brilliance blinded them to their faults and weaknesses, which were many. One in each case providing the means of their undoing. Both were inordinately proud of their aristocratic birth and while that possession enabled them both to over-ride the wishes and feelings of many of their fellows, it only urged their less cultured competitors on to defeat their schemes, bringing their castles in the air down about their ears with the wrath of their own pagan Donar.

The plan hit upon by the three Junkers was accepted by the Reichstag. It was the formation of a *Ministeramt*—a ministerial office of the Reichswehr—and Schleicher became its permanent head, being promoted direct to General of Reichswehr over the heads of fifteen other officers with greater seniority. This office took over all political work of the Reichswehr and gave Schleicher power to attend all sittings of the Reichstag, technically to answer questions, but actually to prevent questions arising.

With this new arrangement covering all traces of German Army activities, von Papen suddenly broke out into a rabid friendship with France and deemed himself the

heaven-sent mediator on all Franco-German differences, which at the time were many. His considerable holding in the *Comité des Forges* became more valuable as the months passed, for the newly-found liberty of the Reichswehr required additional equipment which it was not yet policy to acquire from Krupp, who in any case were pretty busy filling an order book from the East, Russia and South America. By a peculiar coincidence much of the profit made by the French firm, as Albert Thomas of the International Labour Office would have been able to disclose had he not died so suddenly in Paris, whence he had gone from Geneva to report the matter to Tardieu, went via Switzerland and Holland to finance the Hitler movement. More than ever Franz von Papen began to display that false uprightness which has always been considered by foreigners to be the strictly English quality in a politician, and which aroused the mistrust of many who came in contact with him. He appeared to lean more and more towards a rapprochement with France, letting apparently innocent remarks drop at this or that dinner table, or over a cocktail in the bar of the Adlon, Bristol or Kaiserhof.

The company of leaders of the German National People's Party, like Hugenberg, Schacht and Thyssen, seemed preferable to that of Brüning and Kaas of his own Centre Party—for while he was a deputy of the Centre, their liberalism shocked him. The followers of his Conservative Party idea were in the ranks of the so-called People's Party and he concentrated upon earning their good-will, at the same time contacting the more "gentlemanly" leaders of the powerful National Socialist Workers' Party, which, although very noisy and quarrelsome in the street, seemed to believe in many of his ideas, and he was joined to them spiritually in their hatred of the Treaty and their determination to tear it up. That was more to his liking than the cowardly policy of fulfilment of his own Party.

## CHAPTER VI

IN 1929 a coalition Government ruled in Germany, Müller being Chancellor with the support of the Centre Party, without whom no Government seemed capable of working. The Nazis were growling angrily as a kind of background music to this switching of Governments, whose continual changing gave the people no hope for a stable domestic policy. Von Papen was disappointed in Hindenburg; the Field-Marshal had moved to the Left, and he had antagonized the Nationalists of all hues, who were stamping about the country carrying on a bitter attack against him and the Government over the Young Plan.

The position of unemployment in Germany in this year was deplorable and there was every indication that the Government would not be able to continue the State insurance benefits. This would have brought about rioting on a large scale and possibly open rebellion; the Nazis were piling fuel on to the fire of discontent by pointing to the heavy tribute payments alleged to be made by Germany each year, whereas, in actual fact, much of Germany's financial difficulty had been brought about by over-borrowing to finance various policies of negation pursued since 1923, for reason no longer ruled the minds of the administrators of what, before 1914, had been a perfectly managed State.

The Nazis came out in open opposition to the Centre and the Catholics hit back, by excommunicating any of their number who belonged to the Hitler movement, at the same time refusing them Christian burial. Which did not seem to interest Hitler, who claimed to be a Catholic, or any of his followers. Thus Hitler and the whole of his movement, became unrelentingly anti-Catholic. But there was no evidence that Catholics left the Nazi Party; most certainly the Catholic merchants and industrialists, notable

among them being Fritz Thyssen, from whom the Party drew much of its financial support, did not, which shows that the influence of the Catholic religion was already on the wane.

Hindenburg's prestige could not withstand further attacks upon him, which by now had become personal, and he appointed Heinrich Brüning of the Centre Party to the Chancellorship. By now, Brüning had acquired a reputation in the Reichstag as a solid politician and he took office on the 27 March 1930, supported by the high hopes of the moderates in Germany and the good wishes of many in the ex-Allied Powers.

Brüning was a man of no particular connections, except that he had just been elected leader of the Centre Party. His brain and character alone had brought him the office of Chancellor of the Reich. By nature a recluse, shy in the company of others, he lacked that bluff which the mob take for personality, and he became an administrator instead of a leader. His knowledge was stupendous, but his contemplative nature doomed him to a failure as a statesman in a country like Germany. With his sober exactness, uprightness of character and semi-clerical delivery, he failed to waken an echo in the hearts or minds of the German people, yet he ruled with firmness and decision during the most difficult time in Republican Germany. His political progress had been rapid, for he had not entered the Reichstag until 1924. Returning to civil life after the war, he became secretary to Stegerwald, the leader of the Christian Trade Unions, and during the occupation of the Ruhr he organized the passive resistance which soon forced the French to leave the district in despair. Stegerwald was a self-made man and Brüning had the greatest admiration for his work, but there can be no doubt about Brüning's influence on the older man. When Stegerwald became Prime Minister of Prussia, Brüning took over the leadership of the Trade Unions from him, being elected to fill a vacancy in the Reichstag for Silesia. Brüning soon won the confidence of the Centre, being, with his over-polite manner and incisive intellect, the complete antithesis of the dashing, scheming von Papen.

He hated pomp and ceremony and usually rode in a taxi

instead of in his official car, while his manner of living was monkish. Without any political method, Brüning always complicated things in their beginning, tracing tortuous paths in reaching his destination, which, however, he always arrived at.

Whereas Stresemann, for instance, made out of an ordinary press conference something vital and even exciting, by his impromptu methods, Brüning would adjust his glasses, read out from his papers in a colourless tone, looking only occasionally into the room, and conclude with a loud and very exact period. Thanking the Press for their attention in very precise terms, he would then disappear.

At first Hindenburg was against the appointment of Brüning. "Too much Popery," he growled; but when he learned that it was Brüning who had forced the French out of the Ruhr, and that he was an ex-officer, he warmed towards him, forgetting his general dislike of Catholics.

It soon became evident that the sober, bespectacled Brüning enjoyed the confidence of the President. Within the first few weeks of office he had issued no less than seventy emergency decrees, the consent for which had to be obtained from Hindenburg. He became the benevolent dictator and von Papen saw the Social Democratic leader of his own Centre Party (although he would not admit it) preparing the way for his own Conservatism or, alternatively, revolution of the masses.

Wages were reduced and commodity prices rose, in sympathy with the general economic depression that was fast settling in all over the world.

The other Parties in the German political system began to show their annoyance at Hitler's intrusion into the Reich. They were also aware that for some long months he had been negotiating with the League of German Industries and with the Rhenish and Westphalian industrialists. If these negotiations succeeded, then his movement would be adequately financed and capable of putting up candidates in large numbers for the coming Reichstag elections. Still this did not daunt von Papen; for he continued to think that ultimately these noisy storm troopers of Hitler might become the legions of his Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation.



About this time saw the politics in Germany divided into three almost watertight compartments; the Left, Centre, and Right. The Left, as its name implies, was the rallying ground of all with what we in England would call Labour views plus the actual Communist Party, the Centre in the main was composed of various Catholic Parties having Liberal tendencies, and the Right embraced the Nationalists and the Nazis.

The Nationalist Papen snorted at the liberalism of his Party and hob-nobbed with the Right extremists of the German People's Party—with the industrialists of the Ruhr and the Junkers from East Prussia—but he did not have the political courage to give up his association with the Centre and throw in his lot with Hugenberg and company. Instead, his threat to take away solid masses of voters from the Centre, retained for his use the Party machinery, and caused the Nationalists to look favourably upon him—for one day, they all thought, he would bring over all these votes into a solid concentration of Right forces. Communism had become a nightmare to heavy industry, and even the mild Socialism of Heinrich Brüning became suspect. The capitalists and workmen crossed swords and strikes spread throughout the Reich. Labour wanted action and left the organizations of Democracy for the extreme Left Parties and for the Nazis. It was the cleavage in the mass of the electorate that gave National Socialism its opportunity to recruit millions of new members. While being Nationalist it was Socialist and its speakers appeared to have found the answer to the German workman's trouble, the landowners' woes, the professional man's heavy taxation and the industrialists' declining profits—the Jews, reparations, the Marxists and the bonds of the Treaty of Versailles.

Brüning had indeed succeeded to a fearful legacy. Industrial conditions had become worse than they had ever been before. The National Exchequer was so depleted that a cut of 20 per cent on all State salaries had been made; and thus given the lead, business houses followed by imposing similar cuts, often greater, on the salaries or wages of their employees.

In pursuing a policy of paying debts with borrowed

money the Reich Government had brought Germany almost to a standstill. The internal strife of all the Parties was no recommendation to foreign lenders to pour yet more money into the coffers of a State so negligently managed. By increasing taxation and retrenchment in public expenditure, at the expense even of the social services, the budget, it is true, had been balanced, but a legacy from this belated state of equilibrium was handed on into the next year—1930.

Accompanying the lower standard of living arising out of this condition, came far-reaching social repercussions, which in the end tended to convert the economic crisis into a political one. Every class suffered. The Nation as a whole had tried the politics of all the Parties except those of the Nazis—therefore, many turned to this young movement for a way out of the chaos of Social Democracy. Twenty-five per cent of the total Trade Union membership was wholly unemployed, and a further 16 per cent was working on short time. Transitional benefit (*Krisenfürsorge*) rose to tremendous totals in money and number of recipients, until this had to be ruthlessly scaled down. In despair, many, having exhausted their unemployment, transitional benefit and poor relief (*Wohlfart*), discontinued registering at the Labour Exchanges, and these, together with all unemployed persons over sixty years of age, were never again recorded in the official unemployment figures.

These conditions of the working classes in Germany then, reasonably account for the presence of so many manual workers, whose natural place would seem to be among the Socialists and Communists, in the N.S.D.A.P. As yet no attempt, beyond the usual mention of the activities of Hitler and the psychological basis of the movement's mass appeal, has been made to explain the presence of the middle classes.

It must be borne in mind that German National Socialism had a political-social-economic genesis and it retained these three phases throughout its development. What explains the enormous number of middle-class people in its ranks?

The inflation of 1923 destroyed the economic basis of the middle classes, and through their loss of savings, accompanied by insecurity of employment, and the lowering

of their standards of living, they had, in 1930, to a large extent become gradually proletarianized. Until National Socialism had developed to the stage in which it now had orthodox representation in the Reichstag, the huge mass had, for want of another party more suited to their middle-class taste, supported either the Democratic or the purely National Parties. By its varied programme the Nazi Party appeared to fill the gap in Germany's already too numerous class sets. Finally, as the Nazis inveighed most forcibly against the effects of the inflation and burdens of the war, the middle classes accepted its doctrines as a duck takes to water.

During 1930, von Papen was continually attacking Brüning's policy in the Reichstag and in the Prussian Diet, urging him, when his aggressive methods failed, to draw the Right into a coalition Government. Brüning's answer was to dissolve the Reichstag and order new elections. This was in July and the elections were to take place in September. Although the Centre Party was intensely uncompromising in its attitude to National Socialism, Brüning nevertheless made a personal approach to Hitler for moderation. He explained his policy of gradually breaking away from the Treaty by apparently agreeing to its fulfilment, obtaining concessions from the ex-Allied Powers by pleading poverty and thus enlisting sympathy. If Hitler would only cease to harry and embarrass him, he would arrange for Hitler to succeed him as Chancellor in a few years' time, when his policy would have proved successful.

To all these blandishments Hitler and his immediate assistants, Göring and Goebbels, were impervious. The Nazis must have full control at once, because only then could their policy become the programme of the State.

Not dismayed, the crafty Brüning ran to the Western Powers and insisted that Germany must be treated leniently, because he was afraid to what length the Nazis and Nationalists would go. If the Powers would only help him in the pursuit of his policy it would pay them eventually; if they pressed Germany further, it would bring about the fall of his Government and Prussianism or worse would reign in the Reich. So with these threats Brüning kept the Powers at bay and the Nazis in order inside the Reich.

While Brüning was attempting to negotiate for Hitler's support and keeping the pressing foreign creditors at bay with the threat of the man he sought as ally, von Papen was urging upon the Hitler movement the dropping of many of its programme points, such as the confiscation of banks and stock exchange wealth.

Schacht, who had already been President of the Reichsbank, joined the Nazis through Göring's persuasion, because, as he said, "He was a believer in everything that encouraged German Nationalism". During the summer recess of 1930 many such as Schacht joined, or tacitly supported, the National Socialist movement because they believed in a National Germany, and the whisperers of the *Herrenklub* spread abroad the story that Hitler was really Nationalist—not a bad sort of fellow if only he could be got away from his band of cut-throats.

The Reichstag elections of September 1930 yielded 107 seats to the Nazis and they began to be looked upon as a powerful factor in German politics. Foreign newspaper editors began to telegraph to their correspondents for some real news, the Americans particularly requesting reassurances as to the safety of the dollar stake in the Reich.

Hitler, because he was not yet a German citizen, had no seat in the Reichstag and occupied his time by leading the Party in the constituencies, directing the whole activities from Munich. The Nazi representation in Parliament had now become so strong that it required a leader. Goebbels was too busily engaged directing his newspaper and the propaganda department of the Party; Göring was a fighter, and a fighter was needed to lead. So he was appointed the political deputy or commissioner (*Politischer Beauftragter*) of Adolf Hitler. This placed Göring right in the front rank of German politicians; as by the nature of his new post, he was vested with autonomous power in the Reichstag. He was empowered to pledge the Party and its head in matters of policy, and to attack or defend resolutions without term of reference. This placed him at an advantage over the other Parties, who in time of diffi-

culty had to go into committee to deliberate upon the best attitude to be adopted in regard to particular problems, which from time to time arose.

The pursuance of this policy by the Nazis was sufficient indication to the world that all forms of Democratic Government in Germany were doomed. Already Brüning was the instrument of a præsidial Cabinet—a virtual dictatorship controlled by Hindenburg's right of veto—and now the most aggressive Party in the Reichstag was pursuing a similar course, conflict was bound to arise between the dominant Nazi leader and the ascetic, though equally dominant Brüning. With a membership representing 20 per cent of the Reichstag seats, the Nazi Party now began to make itself felt. True, it tabled ridiculous measures which it must have known to be impossible of execution, but it was always goading the united opposition to a change of policy, which, however, never came about.

National Socialism was spreading like a flame throughout the Reich. Crushing taxation bore heavily upon the backs of all, workman or capitalist alike, and soon both sides began to rise in anger at the Social Democratic Parties. Their pent-up hatred was levelled at the Chancellor. "Hunger Chancellor", "Jesuit", "Servant of the Jews" rolled off the tongues of one set, usually led by the Nazis, while Brüning's friends and followers referred to him as the greatest Chancellor since Bismarck. "Germans, five days out of six you are working for the enemy," was the slogan flung at the people by the Nazis, just to rub in the terrific height to which taxation had risen.

The Wall Street crash was reflected in Germany by a slowing down of the wheels of industry in the Ruhr—the *Amerikanische Wirtschaftswunder*, which had risen like a Gholm in the minds of the Germans between 1924 till now, was shown to be a thing having feet of clay.

Nazis and Communists hurled insults and threats at each other and offered the new Jerusalem to the masses. Nazi propaganda, carried on with such virulence, was beginning to have its effect. The State and Municipal elections clearly showed that Hitler was winning. The free Hanseatic State of Bremen fell before the attack of the

Swastika; Hesse, once the home of Liberalism, returned a Nazi majority, as did Anhalt, Baden, Oldenburg, Brunswick and Schaumburg-Lippe. With such a large representation in the Parliaments of the Nation, many National Socialists were all for a revolutionary action of the real kind; machine-guns on the Brandenburg Gate, and so on, with the Swastika flag flying over the Castle, the Chancellery and the Reichstag.

But the leaders knew that "Legality" counted, they also knew that they had stupefied Alfred Hugenberg into an alliance with them—Hugenberg, then the greatest newspaper proprietor and film magnate in Germany. He was also the head of the German National Party, Conservatives to the last man. Soon the cinema screens throughout Germany threw back to audiences pictures of marching men, of Nazi soup kitchens distributing food to the workless in town and village. Pictures of camp life, with its healthy accompaniments of singing and accordion-playing, began to enthuse the multitudes.

The Berlin *Lokal Anzeiger* carried columns of editorials propounding views similar to those which could be found on the main pages of the *Völkischer Beobachter* and *Angriff*, both Hitlerian papers. Shortly afterwards two thousand other German newspapers ran pro-Nazi editorials, and the *Telegraphen Union* and *Wipro Press* agencies sent discreet parcels of syndicated matter to the smaller provincial papers in East Prussia and the other agricultural districts of the Reich.

This was the beginning of von Papen's plan to weld all forces of the Right. He remained in the Centre to work upon it from within, while Hugenberg, the leader of that strong movement of the Right which was clothed in a popular name, but was a hot-bed of reaction, fired the shots that Papen, Schleicher and other gentlemen of the *Herrenklub* made. Between them all Germany was being led to the ultimate Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, which in its twentieth-century garb von Papen designed, and which in later years Adolf Hitler began to build,<sup>1</sup> after dismissing the architect. But the significance of this new turn of respectability on the part of the Nazi leaders and the gracious condescension by the haughty Nationalists,

<sup>1</sup> In 1936 a proclamation was posted on military parade grounds reminding the Army that the Holy Roman Empire "was once our great fatherland".

did not pass unnoticed by either the rank and file of the Nazi Party or the Chancellor. In December 1930, "rebels" of the Berlin S.A. wrecked the Headquarters of the Nazi Party and went out to the nearest pub and got thoroughly drunk. When sober they issued the following manifesto:—

"A large number of our Party members are factory owners and financiers, who arrive at our meetings in large cars. They look to us to protect their money-bags, but they are mistaken. We workers of the fist and of the head will not be cheated out of our Socialistic birthright which, for Dr. Goebbels, is a means and not the end. Our liberation from domestic as well as foreign capital is our aim."

Chancellor Brüning's answer to the implied threat in the Nazi-Nationalist alliance was to issue a decree banning the wearing of political uniforms in Prussia. Meanwhile it appeared that every element in the Reich conspired to render Brüning's position untenable.

The Reichswehr were watching with keen interest the growing power of the National Socialist storm troops. For years it had been the patron of the *Stahlhelm* in whose ranks were many reserve officers, and now that the Nationalists (whose private army the *Stahlhelm* happened to be) had allied openly with the Nazis, informal talks went on between the Army, *Stahlhelm* and S.A. chieftains.

By the middle of 1931 there seemed to be only two elements in political Germany that mattered—the Left and the Nazis. They were both active and noisy. While the Left were inclined to work with Brüning and his Centre, the Nazis simply would not and any attempt to pass a Government motion in the Reichstag was instantly held up by tomfoolery and catcalls from the Nazi benches, accompanied by missiles of various types. This part of the play-acting over, a Nazi deputy would table an amendment in such terms that it presented the Assembly with virtually a new motion. The world began to regard the German situation as something like a joke. Brüning considered that the time had come for him to call a halt to this policy of obstruction, which was ridiculing his Government in the country and abroad.

On 16 June Chancellor Brüning invited Göring, in his

capacity as political Commissioner of Hitler and the N.S.D.A.P., to a conference in the Chancellery. The German Chancellor was supported by his War Minister, General Wilhelm Groener, and Dr. Hans Luther, president of the Reichsbank. Heinrich Brüning was very outspoken. He complained of the conduct of the Nazis in the country and in the Reichstag. He implied that foreign opinion was being swayed against the Government of the Reich, through the reports that the foreign correspondents were sending back to their newspapers. The conduct of affairs in the Reichstag was as fully reported in English and American newspapers. Brüning, supported by his Ministers, called upon Göring to cease his persistent attacks upon the Government and to work with the Government. He asked him to agree to a suspension of the powers of the Reichstag, while the Cabinet ruled through the Presidential emergency decree which he, as Chancellor, had a right to ask Hindenburg to give. Without this agreement between Göring and the Government things would go from bad to worse, and the ultimate effect on Germany's foreign exchange position would be catastrophic.

To all this Göring replied with blunt words. The fault of which the Chancellor complained should be looked for in the record of his own Government following the policy of Jewish Marxism. The last ten years of Social Democratic rule had brought the country to its present pass and no emergency decree could forestall the crash which was bound to come. He, Brüning, could give no guarantee of recovery under his policy; only the fullest operation of the policy laid down by National Socialism could save Germany. If Germany was to be saved, then Brüning must hand over the control of the State to Hitler and his Party. National Socialism, and National Socialism only, was the guarantee that the conditions of the people would not be worsened. Brüning's scheme to dissolve the Reichstag was just another trick to prevent the National Socialist voice from being heard in the Assembly. No, Göring told the Chancellor, while the Nazis would have worked with him some while ago, his policy of the last few months, of already ruling in semi-dictatorship style, completely killed any idea of a coalition.



Shortly after this interview, von Papen who had for some months been sulking on his estates in Westphalia, when not junketing in Paris with the leaders of the French Right such as Paul Reynaud and François Marsal, with whom many whispered confidences and hopes had been exchanged, appeared in the Chancellery and appealed to Brüning to admit into his Cabinet a few members of the Right, fitting in where most useful, certain leading members of the Nationalists and the National Socialists. Brüning would not hear of this, and from this time an open breach between the two led to an intrigue among the Palace clique which resulted in his ultimate dismissal by Hindenburg, and brought about a new phase in German politics resulting in the formation of the Third Reich.

The world depression hit Germany harder than any other country. To pay reparations she had either to borrow or to increase the margin of export trade. Leading up to the crash in the summer of 1931 she had done both. Her manufactured goods had been dumped in every country in a feverish effort to pay dividends on her foreign capital and to contribute to the reparation and loan fund. Crisis abroad had contracted markets, and factory after factory closed down, bringing down with them the banks and insurance companies, which had financed industry beyond the scope of pure banking functions. This has always been a weakness of the German banking system, and explains why a trade crisis caused a bank crisis more readily than in any other country. The scandal of the North German Wool Concern caused the failure of the Darmstädter Bank and other similar causes depleted the Dresdener Bank so badly that the Government had to rush to its rescue by subscribing for three hundred million marks of new preference shares. The flight from the mark had begun. On 13 July the Government closed all the banks, after guaranteeing depositors, and the stock exchanges shut down.

A flight of foreign capital from the Reich began and the Hoover Moratorium, under which a standstill for one year was provided for, came too late to prevent a real crash.

The Savings Banks lost one-seventh of their deposits due to panic-stricken depositors' withdrawals, and in a few weeks, unemployment increased by several millions. The flight of money abroad was stemmed by the imposition of various restrictions, and a financial dictatorship was established. A Press control was instituted and Chancellor Brüning took from the President the right the Constitution gave him, the right to rule by decree, no less than thirty of which Hindenburg signed and handed to him between the first day of the run on the banks and 1 August.

Brüning had made good his threat to Göring, and the operation of these decrees made the working of the Nazi opposition impossible.

In October 1931 a huge rally of all the militant forces of the Right Parties took place in Bad Harzburg. This was the wedding ceremony of the Nazis to the Nationalists. On this day Hitler and Hugenberg stood side by side in an open avowal of the alliance. "Behind us stand twelve million Germans," Hitler said, "and they are all convinced that our united front is necessary to the solving of the German problem."

Then and there was founded what has since become known as the "*Harzburger Front*", which was really a solid phalanx of Nationalism which was to sweep Socialism out of Germany.

Another Papen scheme had begun to work, but, as usual, the scheming Uhlan did not appear publicly in the matter. After all, it might not work out and he wished to be free to pursue other possibilities in that event, for his "idea" was more valuable to him than the reputation of a few Nationalist leaders.

While great enthusiasm over the future was reigning in Bad Harzburg, Brüning was running to and fro between the Chancellery and the President's Palace. He had made up his mind. Heinrich Brüning sat in the room of Bismarck and dictated a Press notice for all the world to read. "Germany, by reason of her financial crisis, can no longer pay reparations and she will not."

The Socialist Chancellor had stolen quite a lot of thunder which the new front had prepared to release upon a bewildered Germany.

The Nazi guns were spiked in another way; General Groener took over the portfolio of the Interior, which gave him, in addition to his hundred thousand Reichswehr, one hundred and fifty thousand policemen, or in other words, a total strength of two hundred and fifty thousand armed and trained men with which to face any attempt at a Putsch, of whatever magnitude. For over a year Brüning had astutely kept his own faction in order and the foreign creditors at bay by holding up Hitler as the bad man of the piece; and he hoped to continue this policy until, as he thought, he could wear the forces of the Right down into submission to his leadership.

Meanwhile, in Berlin, Hindenburg, impressed by the growing strength of the Nazi Party and its union with Hugenberg's Nationalists, of which Party he himself had once been a pillar, invited Hitler to discuss his policy with him. The "old Gentleman" had influences around him which were dailing counselling a repudiation of Brüning, the "Hunger Chancellor".

A way was being sought to find the Nazis a place in the Government and thus end their opposition, hoping thereby to bring out the constructive side of their leaders and to present a more solid front to European opinion.

The main idea behind this first interview between Hindenburg and the Nazi Party leaders was to enable the President to weigh up the quality of Hitler and his lieutenants, and to make himself acquainted with their domestic and foreign politics. Already Dr. Otto Meissner, the Secretary of State in the Chancellery, had visited Hitler for informal talks and von Papen had been carrying tales about Hitler's Nationalism to Hindenburg, often through Oskar von Hindenburg, the President's son and adjutant.

The old man appeared to listen to the views of the Nazi delegation, but he was a little at sea over some of their themes, which smacked too much of change—but after all they were Nationalists. For many years he had suffered the eyesore of the Republican flag, and the Nazis swore to restore the old one under which he had fought against the French in two wars; and now the Nationalists had joined with the Nazis, it meant that all the gentlemen were together.

Could they form a Government, though, the President

wondered. If the streets told a true tale, these fellows had the people behind them and with the Nation at last behind one movement, other countries could be shown their places. Well, he would think about their ideas.

The only intimation to the foreign and domestic Press, at the time, was an official notice passed through the Wolff Telegraph Agency on the evening of the actual day, 10 October 1931:—

“The Reichspräsident to-day received Mr. Adolf Hitler and Reichstag Deputy Captain Hermann Göring (retired) and took from them a detailed report on the plans of the National Socialist movement. Following upon this, discussions took place on the question of home and foreign politics.”

A few days before this meeting, the dirge of the Centre Party was sung by von Papen. He had not forgotten the several threats made to eject him from the Party nor the personal affront, when the upstart Brüning had refused to listen to his warning in June. For months he had been feeling out the ground; he had sounded the more reactionary members of the Right in the Centre and he was sure of the support of the so-called German People's Party, which had now become a part of the Harzburger Front. Equipped with all this knowledge he knew that he could dig the grave of his own Party, with Brüning as the chief mourner.

On 3 October he addressed the agricultural club in Dülmen on questions of the hour, and his speech showed that he meant business. This speech, in the opinion of the Nationalists, marked von Papen as the coming man—the leader—for he was the only man from among all the Right to speak so openly.

He drew a moving picture of Germany's position among the nations and blamed the successive coalition Governments for Germany's continued economic distress. The system of coalition must end. He demanded the dissolution of all middle or Liberal Parties and maintained that Germany could only be ruled by a Government of national concentration. To reinforce his personal appeal to Brüning, he now publicly demanded of him that in order to prove

his love of Germany (of which he had so often spoken) he must draw into the Cabinet all men of goodwill in the Nationalists and the National Socialists—or get out.

It was more than a coincidence that moved Hindenburg to call Hitler to him only a week later. From von Papen the word had gone on to the President, through Oskar von Hindenburg, that it was at least worth while to see what the Nazi people had to say for themselves. Having seen them, the aged President forgot all about them and retired to his place at Neudeck to hibernate through the winter.

The turn of the year 1931-32 saw Germany struggling in a greater helplessness than ever. Anarchy was openly sweeping the streets of the big cities and the small towns—the country dweller was as impoverished as the people in the towns. Opposing private armies, equipped with hunting knives, knuckle-dusters, loaded canes and often times with revolvers, met each other in the squares, main thoroughfares, and narrow lanes throughout the disturbed country. The youth of all organizations were naturally more provocative than the staid political-minded elders. The breaking of heads was consequently invariably left to the youngsters. In the class-room and in sport, the youth of Germany was divided, and a return to medieval times was being witnessed. The tilt-yard, true, had not returned, but its modern counterpart was very much in evidence. When a band of young Communists marched gaily down the street, singing:—

“Every wheel sings Red Front,  
We protect the Soviet Union,”

a posse of National Socialists would appear as if conjured up by magic and respond, if possibly, more heartily:—

“Brothers, Hitler leads us  
When the hour is ripe.  
Deep in North, high in South  
Dawns the German morn.  
With us marches the new time.”

The operatic part of the processional performance over, the two sides would proceed to lay about each other with any weapon near to hand. The casualties would crawl home to be bandaged by their mothers, sisters or wives. Political

murder became a regular piece of front-page news in every German newspaper, and all sides gave a most solemn and official funeral to their dead. The value of life in Republican Germany was at a discount, and a murder perpetrated for the sake of a Party stood at a high premium.

The Weimar Constitution had abolished capital punishment and the absence of retribution from the State loosed many a death-blow which would otherwise have been withheld. With a good lawyer, most of these political murderers escaped with a nominal sentence, and often they were allowed out on parole because the gaols were too full.

Not only the rank and file revolted at the Nazi hierarchy's apparent surrender to the extreme Nationalism of Hugenberg and von Papen. Everywhere there was talk of betrayal. For some while the brothers Otto and Gregor Strasser had not seen eye to eye with the policy of Hitler, Göring and Goebbels. Both brothers were members of the old guard of the Party, with a membership going back to the Munich days. They were attracted to the Party by the ideas of Gottfried Feder, who believed in a form of politics which appeared to be more Communistic than Nationalistic. He would destroy the right of capital to receive reward, by abolishing, as he called it, "the thrall-dom of interest". The ownership of land was in danger and one could read into his programme a complete participation by the proletariat in the wealth of the few. Lenin appeared to be a more suitable leader of Feder's idea of National Socialism than Adolf Hitler.

These two Strassers had sold their chemist's business in the early days to subscribe to the funds of the Nazi movement, and in the light of this the leaders wondered at their apparent impending open defection.

Whenever Gregor Strasser spoke from the Nazi benches in the Reichstag, he was applauded by the Government side. More and more he was moving to a break with his Party, and from the early part of 1932 the Nazi movement was riven with internecine strife. Money was running low, but always some section or supporter of the Party came forward with money. While Göring was harassing Brüning, the Strasser faction was publishing books, and pamphlets, all

pointing to the change of policy that was coming over the Nazi movement. Yet they made no definite break. Their conduct led to much heartburning among the bigger industrialists, to whose interests party-splitting would come most inopportune. Communism was being fanned to such a degree that riots were legion and in Berlin, for instance, the Communist vote had risen to about a million out of a total electorate of 2,709,257, making the German capital, next to Moscow, the biggest Communist stronghold in the world.

The Brüning Cabinet had naturally been aware of the conference of Hitler and Göring with Hindenburg in the autumn of the previous year, and it had made several attempts to reconcile the Nazis to a policy of collaboration. Brüning had personally asked Göring to allow of the reintroduction of the *Burgfrieden*<sup>1</sup> which would prevent broken heads and further attacks on the Governments in the anti-Government Press and in the constituencies. Brüning himself admitted that the move would have relieved his own desperate situation. Then General Groener suggested that Adolf Hitler should join the Government with the portfolio of Foreign Affairs. To both these suggestions Göring turned a deaf ear, to the latter pointing out that National Socialism, with its huge membership behind it (at that time) of twelve million, could not join in a coalition Cabinet, having only one vote. National Socialism could not keep its promise to the people unless it had complete control of the Government of the Reich.

In his New Year address to the Nation, President von Hindenburg, while appearing to support his Chancellor, at the same time showed that he had imbibed some of the doctrines of Hitler after that autumn interview. "The terrible sacrifices that we are making," he declared, "justify us in appealing before the whole world against obstacles being placed in the way of our National recovery by the imposition of intolerable burdens. In the question of disarmament, too; Germany must not be debarred from her

<sup>1</sup> This was a mutually agreed upon interlude between the Parties. They all undertook not to hold meetings or demonstrations, and its favoured period was from a few days before Christmas Eve until after the New Year. At the time of this request Göring was President of the Reichstag, as well as Hitler's personal representative in the House.

undoubted rights. Our claim to equal security is so clear that it cannot be contested."

The speech clearly showed at the time, to those who had remembered the October meeting, that if the "old gentleman" would have no open dealings with Hitler, he at least leaned towards his philosophy, for on no other occasion had he ventured to speak so openly of Germany's right to re-arm. Throughout the tenure of his office he had kept strenuously to a policy of non-aggravation of the foreigner, for he doubtless bore in mind his own part in European affairs between 1914 and 1918 and realized that jingoism too publicly uttered would have brought the nations on Germany's heels like a pack of wolves from his beloved East Prussia.

When Hindenburg made this speech he had only three more months to run in office. He wished to retire. He wanted to spend the remaining few days of his life away from this madness of Berlin, with its multiplicity of Parties and intrigue. Brüning approached Göring to persuade Hitler and Hugenberg to agree to a continuance of the Field-Marshal in the office of President of the Reich, without the inconvenience of new elections. After consultation with his Party chief, Göring went back to the Chancellery and indicated that no such arrangement would be acceptable. Hitler followed it up by an official refusal to endorse the Cabinet proposal. "Article I of the Weimar Constitution states that Germany is a Republic deriving all power from the people. Article 41 lays down that the President shall be chosen by the entire people. The Weimar Constitution is the legal basis of the German Republic," he concluded. Thus Hitler appeared to become the champion of the people's rights, and by this outward show of legality many millions of people turned towards him and his movement, the result of which was to show in forthcoming elections.

Hindenburg persisted in his attitude and prepared to retire. His friends pressed him to stand for re-election, with the result that he decided to offer himself again to the electorate. In a long speech to the people, in which he explained that his reason for standing again was not a political one, but rather out of a sense of duty to the fatherland, he concluded: "In my view there is only one genuine



National goal—the fusion of all sections of our people for their fight for existence, the selfless devotion of every German to the stern struggle for the maintenance of our Nation.”

This was somewhat paradoxical, for the aged President knew that he would have Hitler in the lists against him, he knew that because of the existence of the Harzburger Front he could not count upon Hugenberg's Nationalists, and his own *Stahlhelm*, an organization of which he was honorary president, had entered its joint chairman, Colonel Dusterberg, as a candidate.

German politics have always been a source of puzzlement to foreign observers, but in 1932 there was presented the paradox of Communists, dissatisfied with their own leaders, joining the Party representing the complete antithesis of their Marxian doctrines, and of disgruntled Nazis leaving their old Party, either to disappear from politics or to throw in their lot with the opposition. On closer inspection the cause was not far to seek. Poverty, not the failure of German militarism in 1918, had bred Communism, just as the new poverty of the middle classes through inflation, had fostered Nazi-ism. Quite 80 per cent of German Communists were followers of Marxist doctrines because it fed their stomachs. For many years money was fairly plentiful in the German Communist Party, from a source in common which supplies the sinews of war to the official Communist Parties of all other Democratic States, and weekly allowances, soup kitchens, and holiday camps, bought the membership in Germany as the same amenities had bought membership elsewhere. When the sources of this finance decided upon a policy of retrenchment in its support of official Communism in Germany, after it had become fairly patent that the Germans were, in post-war days what they had always been, rabid Nationalists, thousands of “Communists” were without means of support.

Concurrently with the poverty of Communism, the Nazi Party rose to a condition of affluence, and the subsidizing of its members caused the erstwhile Communists to join up with this movement, which, after all, appeared to be more Germanic than the strange growth which was fostered from the Karl Liebknecht Haus.

Unemployment figures in Germany had risen still higher, 48 per cent of the total Trade Union membership being completely without work, with a further 25 per cent working on short time. This was the dissatisfied material that fed the Nazi fire, and upon whose ears the promises of Hitler, Göring and Goebbels fell as sweet music.

The result of the Presidential election was known on 13 March, but there was need for a second ballot, because, although Hindenburg had secured a large vote, it did not give him a clear majority.

	Votes
Field-Marshal von Hindenburg	18,661,376
Hitler (National Socialist)	11,338,571
Thaelmann (Communist)	4,982,079
Düsterberg (Nationalist)	2,557,876

The second ballot gave the Nazi candidate over 2,000,000 more votes, which proved clearly which way the wind was blowing. Undoubtedly, respect for the Field-Marshal by many of his old warriors in the electorate kept them from voting for Hitler.<sup>1</sup> The figures of the second ballot, declared on 10 April, gave the retiring President just that little margin to return him, due, of course, to the fact that the Nationalist candidate had stood down, his votes obviously being distributed among Hitler and Hindenburg in roughly equal proportion.

	Votes
Hindenburg	19,359,642
Hitler	13,417,460
Thaelmann	3,706,388

<sup>1</sup> Until just before the nomination of candidates for the election, Adolf Hitler was not even a German citizen. His friend, Dr. Frick, a one-time official in the police department in Munich at the time of the Putsch, was a National Socialist Minister in a coalition State Government in Thuringia during 1930, and had arranged to make him a petty official in a small town, Hildburghausen. This did not go through, and the anti-Nazi Press dug it up in 1932 and made much of it, to ridicule Hitler in an attempt to embarrass him and to induce him to stand down. In the meantime, however, the Nazi Minister Klagges, in the coalition Government of Brunswick on the 24th February formally appointed him Regierungsrat (Government councillor) in his State Government, and thereby automatically qualifying him for naturalization as a German subject. Under the Weimar Constitution, any foreigner holding an official post under a State, or the Reichs Government qualified automatically as a German.

It will be noticed that the Communist vote was down by more than a million. This election had practically ruined the Nazi Party financially, and the result proved disheartening to every organizer. On all hands it was being attacked, and the Strasser brothers found many who rallied to their side.

The result of the Presidential elections kept Hindenburg as a lever for the *Herrenklub* and the Palace clique, and von Papen thought that everything was going as well as he could wish. Hitler had proved himself almost as good as Hindenburg as an appeal to the Nation, but to test that point had ruined the Nazi exchequer and had left it heavily in debt. But von Papen had the whip hand, for his friends, the heavy industrialists, held Hitler's drafts. On presentation day, when it was certain that they could not be met, von Papen could name his terms. Having thus made sure of the obedience of the Nazis, as he thought, he proceeded to further the destruction of the Centre Party. He protested publicly and in the National Press against the manoeuvres of the Centre in bringing about elections in Prussia. He maintained that this constant change was bad for Prussia, owing to the obvious lack of continuity in administration. He reproached Brüning and the Centre with their Leftist views, and in a letter to *Der Ring*, in which he enclosed his protest for publication, he wrote: ". . . the Centre is going to be Christian-Conservative—or else it will not exist at all."

This was too much for the executive of the Centre Party, which considered that it had been patient too long with Herrn von Papen, and it forbade his re-election and prohibited his nomination to any other constituency.

To avoid the public affront of this all too obvious action, tantamount to ejection from the élite of the Centre Party, von Papen moved from Westphalia to his estate at Wallerfangen, which gave him the excuse of not being able to stand for the Prussian elections, since he had no longer a vote in Prussia.

In the Germany of 1932 election appeared to occupy the whole time of the individual. The Presidential election over, State and Municipal elections were in full swing.

The Nazis had hardly time to get over their bitter disappointment of March and April, when they had to go again into the fray in the whole of Prussia and in some of the smaller States. Money was very, very scarce. The Party-owned Press made some profits which of course helped the electoral fights. The industrial backers were withholding support in any quantity until they could see how the wind was blowing; so it was, in this difficult time, the members of the Party, and they alone, who kept the wheels of National Socialism oiled. At meetings it was no uncommon sight to see married couples give up their wedding-rings to be sold to provide funds.

Brüning, just after the fateful result of the Presidential elections, was planning to prohibit the S.A. and S.S. throughout the whole of the Reich. This would have made the Nazi Party almost impotent for the coming Prussian Diet elections. On 14 April the whole of the uniformed section of the National Socialist Party was proscribed throughout the Reich, and in Prussia at least the police took over all Nazi Party headquarters. This prohibition was the final spark to set Germany alight from border to border. Every Nazi was furious, and there were many millions of them. Even Hindenburg, who had signed the decree for Brüning, hesitated, was inclined to withdraw, and then hit upon the brilliant compromise of also banning the *Reichsbanner*, the Republican equivalent of the *Sturmabteilungen*. But Groener, in his capacity as War Minister, advised against this move, and the President went on a visit to Neudeck and the whole thing was over.

The Nazi Party, through Göring, its spokesman in the Reichstag, denounced the proscription and called for the resignation of the Brüning Government, in terms which showed that the Party considered itself the senior partner in the Nazi-Nationalist Front.

" . . . and so we declare to-day that the Cabinet no longer enjoys the trust of the people, who are clamouring for new men. We turn to all who want to help to work for the rebuilding of Germany. Just now, when we have emerged from the elections stronger than ever, we reach out our hands to a united reconstruction, but everybody

must know that, basically, a new course has to be taken. We are not going to put new beauty spots on the old patchwork. To those who do not take our hand we declare that we will go on fighting ruthlessly. We will fulfil our historic mission to reconcile all classes and to make it clear to all that the question of the Nation's destiny has to be placed above the petty questions of everyday life, and that the classes, confessions, and professions have to bow down to the problem of the destiny of the German Nation. As a supposition to this the Brüning Cabinet must go. It must go in order that Germany can live."

This speech had the effect of proving two things to Hindenburg about both of which until now he had only the vaguest of notions, kept in seclusion as he was by the ring of Barons and Generals behind Brüning; that the Brüning Cabinet, despite its emergency measures, could not for long keep order in the Reich, and that the Reichswehr leaned more and more to a policy of using the Nazis, for within a week or two General Groener resigned, thereby showing full well that he knew that the decree for which he had pressed, proscribing the Nazi storm troops, was a political and tactical mistake.

On the eve of this Reichstag debate, von Papen and Hitler met at the house of a mutual acquaintance. Franz von Papen made a startling offer to the leader of the Nazi movement—would he care to become the Vice-Chancellor in a new Government? But Hitler thought that a certain Heinrich Brüning was Chancellor of the Reich, and said so. Von Papen remarked confidentially, with a knowing smile, that he was empowered to make the offer by the President.

"Then who is to be the Chancellor?" naturally enquired Hitler.

"Well, of course, that goes without saying," beamed von Papen. "The President is of the opinion that I enjoy the confidence of the Right and he has invited me to form a Cabinet."

Again Hitler refused office in a coalition Cabinet. He required full powers or nothing. He argued that as the Nazi policy in the country and in the Reichstag had defeated Brüning, then quite obviously, parliamentarily, he

should have been invited by Hindenburg to form a Government.

But Parliamentarianism no longer ruled in Germany; Brüning's policy of ruling by decree had rendered Parliament impotent, while Hindenburg, with von Papen as his instrument, was about to kill it.

Franz von Papen, in his attempt to overthrow Brüning and rule in his stead, had mobilized every conceivable section of Nationalism in the struggle. The Nazis required no inciting to stage demonstrations against the Government, so these he left to follow their own plans. The President, who had just been re-elected to office, and in whose cause no man had laboured more sincerely than his Chancellor, was made to see Brüning in a disgraceful light by Hindenburg's own friends among the Junkers. They wrote him complaining letters about conditions on their land and the lot of agriculture generally, blaming Brüning for this condition because of his refusal to increase the payments from the land fund, which, from all accounts, had so far been only used by bankrupt squires from East Prussia to live riotously in Paris and on the Riviera, and who came back for more when the earlier subsidy had been exhausted. Brüning, aware of this, had decided to use these Junker lands, which were neglected in any case, for agricultural settlements in an endeavour to increase the productivity of the State. The Junkers incited Hindenburg against Brüning by the tale that expropriation was in the wind, whereupon the old President forgot his oath to the Republic and remembered his duty to his caste.

At that moment Brüning was in Geneva and Hindenburg was at Neudeck. Franz von Papen and Kurt von Schleicher were in informal conversation with the French Ambassador, who was acquainted with the news that the Right had decided upon bringing about Brüning's fall.

In Geneva, Heinrich Brüning, German Chancellor and delegate to the League, was being fêted by the representatives of fifty-two nations for having prevented Hitler from becoming President by his electoral campaigning on behalf of Hindenburg, against his Party and his conscience. Nor did he leave Geneva empty-handed. The Powers realized

that the Hitler movement in Germany waxed strong on the sufferings of the Reich, real and imaginary, which the post-war conditions, plus obstacles imposed by the Treaty, thrust upon it. They resolved to liquidate the Hitler menace from without; what actually happened was that the League Council gave Brüning the weapon with which he could prove to Germany that equality would come without a Hitler, and thereby put an end to the need for his existence.

England, America and Italy agreed to support his claims for Germany—cancellation of reparations, permission to import arms, the right to build frontier fortifications, an increased peace-time army of 300,000 effectives, the right to train and embody a militia additional to the standing army, the introduction of short army service (five years with the colours), which would give a larger potential reserve in a third of the normal time.

What was the French Ambassador doing with von Papen and von Schleicher? Listening to very sound reasons (so he was told) why the real governors of Germany did not wish for Brüning's achievements with the League to be ratified by France. Here von Papen's French connections came in. The French, whose cry for a thousand years had been security against the Germans, still feared German resurgence and believed that German militarists plotted revenge.

Von Papen, who was, of course, as he told them, a friend of France, and a leading exponent of Franco-German friendship, warned the French that if these rights, agreed to by the majority of the Great Powers at Geneva, were finally granted, it would prove disastrous for France, because there were, as France rightly suspected, elements in certain German political quarters which were plotting to make again of Germany a great Nation at the expense of others. Franz von Papen forgot to mention that he was one of those elements.

Telephone bells rang from Berlin to Paris and Geneva, several diplomatic illnesses caused the absence of French politicians from important international conferences and the ratification of the Brüning concessions was temporarily held over.

Papen breathed again. He yet had time to oust Brüning before the next meeting at Geneva. Once Germany knew that these equal rights had been accorded her, the people (and the heavy industrialists, who conveniently financed Nationalist adventurers) would settle down to a consolidation of the moral gain by a serious attempt at reviving trade and industry, and in the doing, they would either forget or have no time for a Holy Roman Empire of Western Germans and other such clap-trap. Oh, no, the *sacrum imperium* of the gallant Uhlan was not going to be pushed on one side by the diplomatic achievements of a bourgeois Chancellor. The old gentleman at Neudeck must be kept away from Brüning until he had received a few more letters from his "starving" Junker brethren, who, it seemed, were in danger of expropriation because the subtle Brüning had completely closed the purse string of the Eastern Aid Fund.

On 29 May 1932 Brüning waited upon Hindenburg to report on Geneva and to complain that in his absence there appeared to have grown up a secondary Cabinet in the Reich. Hindenburg countered by speaking of agrarian Bolshevism and that he (the man who had by his support kept him in the headship of the Reich) no longer had his confidence. He must go, Hindenburg told him, "for the sake of my name and my honour". To which Heinrich Brüning replied, no longer overawed as the machine-gun subaltern before the Field-Marshal: "I, too, have my name and honour to defend in history."

A little twinge of conscience must have made the old man reply: "Although, as between officers you will see that you must go, I would nevertheless like to retain you as my Foreign Minister." "I am no Bethmann-Hollweg," retorted Brüning, "I will have nothing to do with a policy in which I cannot believe." And as a parting shot he exclaimed: "I hope that your new man will not cause you to contemplate a course which will involve scrapping the Constitution."

Half an hour later Franz von Papen was discussing his proposed Cabinet with Field-Marshal von Hindenburg.



## CHAPTER VII

SOME time during May von Papen heard of a plan to form a new coalition Cabinet with certain puppets of von Schleicher in key positions and with Gregor Strasser, a member of the Nazi old guard, as the Prime Minister of Prussia. Through devious channels, in the best von Papen tradition, Göring got to hear of this scheme and, with his usual strong arm measures, nipped it in the bud.

Ever since von Papen had assisted in the plan to make the Reichswehr independent of the Reichstag, von Schleicher had gone from strength to strength. He liked to be known as the Socialist General and he boasted that he had made and unmade Groener (which was ridiculous, for Groener was a general when the Socialist General was only a captain), that he had overthrown that "fathead" von Seeckt, forgetting that von Seeckt had a sound war record, and had turned a Chinese rabble into an army, and now he was boasting that Hindenburg ate out of his hand and that he was about to enthrone "an army man" in the Reichs Chancellery. When pressed for details he retired behind his mask of the strong man.

Kurt von Schleicher certainly exercised strong influence with Hindenburg and there were certain sections of the Reichswehr stupid enough to believe him capable of organizing and controlling a military dictatorship. Von Schleicher had been an officer in the Prussian Guards and, like von Papen, had been appointed to the General Staff while only just turned thirty. During the war he served on the Staff of the Quartermaster-General and as Ludendorff became Military Dictator after the middle period of the war, most of the Socialist General's war experience was gained in enforcing draconian measures against the civil population of Wilhelm's Reich. After

the revolution he was one of those officers who organized volunteer corps for the preservation of order, serving under Groener, the General "whom he had made".

Like many other Imperial Guardes, he was not too proud to serve under the Republican War Minister Noske, who slaughtered women and children in the streets of Berlin and other cities with machine-gun fire from his roaming armoured cars, before and after the curfew hour had rung. For some unknown reason, when the Reichswehr was formed as the Republic's official army, he was made political liaison officer at the Reichswehr Ministry and his strong man reputation commenced to grow from that date, until the foreign Powers came to believe what a blessing it was for them that von Schleicher had his eye on Germany and his hand ready to pounce. Actually, he was the biggest charlatan and adventurer that post-war Germany produced. He became the resting-place of all European intrigue, inter-changing secrets with the parties of the Left and the Right, first working to bring about a military alliance with Russia through the Russian General Staff<sup>1</sup> and then facing about to try to put through a deal with the French General Staff.

He was just a wooden soldier of uniforms, parade grounds, maps and theoretical strategy, around whom a myth of strength had gathered, largely because of what he left unsaid. Judged by army standards he would be considered an able man, but he should have stuck to soldiering, for as a politician his ranking was zero.

. . . . .

For forty-eight hours after Brüning's departure from the Wilhelm Strasse, Germany was without a Government. During those few hours Franz von Papen did some hard thinking and quick acting. Ever since his determination to remove Brüning and to convert the Centre to Conservatism or smash it, he had on many occasions told Hindenburg that he could carry the members of the Centre with him and while he could count upon the support of the Nationalist Party proper automatically, he also had a lever which would bring Hitler to heel and guarantee his support;

<sup>1</sup> Most of the Russian Generals executed in purges of recent years had been in regular correspondence and personal contact with Schleicher.

and being an army man, he naturally enjoyed the complete confidence of the Reichswehr.

Events showed that he was unable to command the loyalty of any of these, for while they were all prepared to conspire with him and indeed use him, they were not prepared to let him be their master.

What was the lever von Papen intended using against Hitler? Nothing less than the money bags, as most of the heavy backers of the Nazi movement were his friends in the Ruhr. One word from him and—the President understood—among brother officers there was no need to enlarge upon the situation.

Another meeting took place between the Nazi chieftains and von Papen, and finally it was agreed that as Chancellor von Papen could rely upon the support of the Nazi Party in the Reichstag, but he must repeal the ban on the S.A. and the S.S. immediately upon taking office. With this promise readily given, von Papen went to Hindenburg and confirmed that this time he was sure that he had the Nazis behind him, because Herr Hitler had given him his solemn word.

"Yes, I know," tiredly remarked the Field-Marshal, for by now he was getting just a little too much of this solemn pledge farce and it reminded him too much of his own broken words, "Herr Hitler solemnly swore to me that we could rely upon him to support us. In fact he was most passionate to Meissner<sup>1</sup> and although I didn't hear him, Schleicher says that he has Hitler's oath that his movement will support a truly National Government."

Hitler agreed to von Papen's Chancellorship, but insisted that new elections should take place to enable the electorate to show its feelings correctly—which it did.

While Brüning was at Geneva, von Papen, anxious to give his friends of the French Right hope that there would soon be a more conservative Government on the German side of the Rhine, wrote to a friend in Paris: "*Après Brüning vient le chaos.*" The dashing Uhlan had added the rôle of prophet to his many other qualifications.

On 1 June 1932 the world read in its morning news-

<sup>1</sup> Personal Secretary of State to the President of the German Republic. Now occupying the same office to the German Reichskanzler and Führer.

papers that Herr von Papen was Chancellor of the German Reich, to which office he had been appointed by Hindenburg after he had just sworn to Kaas, the doyen of the Centre Party (but the world did not know that) that on no account would he take office except as the head of a Centre Party Cabinet.

Of all German Chancellors, von Papen was perhaps the most unknown to the German people, and he was the first Chancellor in Republican Germany to be appointed without reference to the wishes of the Reichstag. The President had dozed and had forgotten that he was only the elected head of a Democratic State; the man who could say, as he did to Brüning a few months earlier when the new boundaries of Prussia were being discussed, "It is my determination to leave the Prussian heritage undiminished to my successor", had indeed dreamed himself into the shoes of Wilhelm.

The German masses asked: "Who is this Papen?" while those more in the know, after looking at the Cabinet, said: "Monstrous! A Cabinet of Junkers and industrialists!"

The twelve million voters who had supported Hitler at the polls in the recent Presidential elections, looked in vain for his name among the Ministers.

The new Chancellor had picked his Cabinet colleagues from the arm chairs of the *Herrenklub*, and made von Schleicher his Minister of War, who told his friends confidentially that he had only consented to take office to get a firmer grip on the Reichswehr. Which looked suspiciously like it, for on the second day in office he issued an order that in future all military attachés at German Embassies should as far as possible be of the rank of General, in order to equalize their standing with the Ambassadors.

The days of von Papen's Chancellorship were probably the most uncomfortable of his whole career. The moment he took office, the whole Catholic Press and political organizations united in a common attack upon him, which must have shaken the confidence of the rugged President and confirmed him more than ever in his anti-Catholic views.

The Field-Marshal knew how to deal with mutineers, but the new Chancellor did not, so, threatened with violent

opposition from the Centre and the Left in the new Reichstag after the pending elections, he asked for and obtained from the President the operation of Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution, which assumed a state of emergency and provided the Government with means to rule virtually as dictator.

This brought the Christian Trade Union about his ears and even evoked a spirited protest from the Catholic Mothers' League, ably led by a number of Prelates. From this date, the Catholic von Papen ceased to exist. He became a thorough-going Nationalist politician, remaining perhaps a Catholic in his private life, for, as he said, this attack on him "proved that it was high time in Germany to separate theologians from politics and to make of them curés of the soul again—to lead them out of Parliament into the Churches, where they rightly belong".

To prove his Nationalism he commenced to lecture to select groups of the Army, laying before them magnificent plans for the growth of Germany, which incidentally was to become the leader of a crusade against Bolshevism. To carry on this crusade, money and arms would be needed, which the Western Powers would provide. Germany once armed, fulfilling its civilizing mission in Europe, with Russia brought to her knees, would then decide the future of the leadership of the European Nations at the gates of Paris, with arms bought with fellow-crusaders' money. Indeed a pretty picture, and coming fittingly from one who hoped to rebuild the same type of throat-cutting Empire which was at its zenith during the days of the Holy Wars.

Von Papen, in invoking Article 48 had impressed Hindenburg with the fact that there was a state of emergency in the Reich. There was, but his first few days in office seemed to ignore it. With millions of Germans without work and on the bread-line, as Chancellor, whose duty it was to find them food and work, he addressed the Agricultural Council in the *Herrenhaus* (old Imperial House of Lords) on the reasons for the breakdown in Germany. As only he can speak, with a delicate choice of words he explained to them that the main reason of the economic crisis lay in the fact that private industry

had to a large extent become socialized. Now to the average observer in Germany, quite the reverse appeared to obtain, but von Papen's hearers agreed, and so he went on to the next theme. He wished to put before them in correct form (within the framework of the Constitution, they would naturally understand) the new radical direction State policy would take.

While such meetings as these were being held in Berlin, throughout the country all classes had reached the end of their patience and their pockets. The notoriously forgetful Chancellor, busy with academic arguments about the future, had not yet redeemed his promise to repeal the ban on the Brownshirts, and it was with difficulty that the personality of Hitler kept their temper in check. Göring was inciting their passions with his inflammatory speeches, and it had got about that he had told General von Schleicher that unless the ban was repealed immediately "things must take their natural course". Von Schleicher knew very well what the natural course would be. Streets running in blood and the Reichswehr called out to put an end to the conflict. So he went back to von Papen and reported Göring's conversation, whereupon the ban on the storm troops was hastily repealed, for he did not want to have the Nazis "behind" him, in the other sense, so early in his Chancellorial career.

. . . . .

The most important incident in von Papen's Chancellorship was the result of the Lausanne Conference in June and July, which entitled him to stand for just one second on a political and diplomatic equality with Brüning and Stresemann.

He succeeded at last in convincing the Powers that Germany must be helped or go under and his appeal freed the German Nation, not only from paying tribute for having lost the war, but proved beyond doubt that she had won the peace.

The mere promise to pay at some distant date (and if it was not paid, the promissory note would be torn up) the sum of three milliard marks, put an end to any further payment in the meantime. It sounds a peculiar way of running business, but an inspection of the agreement will confirm this, although in slightly more mystifying language.

In order to acquaint the German people that two future generations had been relieved of paying for the mistakes of the madman who ruled Germany in 1914, and for being put on their feet by friendly ex-enemies in 1920, he spoke over the German radio network, and to-day his speech looks as if it might well have been made by Hitler. "The German people have the right to be acquainted by the head of its Government, in the quickest possible manner of the result of the Lausanne Conference. In this historic hour there is no room for party politics, for the greater the problem to be attacked, the greater must be the freedom from all points of view, with which one steps forward to solve the problem. We went on with the work in the firm belief in the united and strong will of the German homeland, in the knowledge that we were leaders of a country which is ready to lead a victorious fight for economic and National freedom.

"Has this fight brought success? You, my dear fellow countrymen, when you have heard my explanations, shall give judgement. You shall judge, after you have heard what we wanted and what we have achieved. Our task was to liquidate the past and to free the future of the German Nation from the pressure which crippled all economic activity, which disturbed all effort at reconstruction and which ended in a fight of all against all.

"It became important to create the foundation of life, which made it possible for the Nation to rise once more in spiritual, cultural and economic paths. For a long time now the world has been very clear in its mind that any constructive thought for the re-installation of normal economic and political connections among the Nations of Europe could not come true until such time as the destructive one-sided tribute payment system; which yields nothing productive, was done away with.

"In spite of this, it became very apparent at Lausanne that the road to a realization of this fact was very hard and far off. The return of trust in the world demanded the urgent removal of reparation payments. A way had to be found to remove this mistrust, which was the cause and outcome of the heavy and unbearable economic burdens which depressed Germany. For the restoration of such a

trust in its highest form we were ready to make one last great effort. For this we fought for three weeks. We remained hard and unrelenting, because we knew of the bitter need in Germany, because we knew of the anxious hopes of so many unemployed, because we felt the responsibility for sixty-five million Germans and because we were clear in our minds that any deviation from our plans would only bring Germany and the world into deeper misfortune. Great crises had to be overcome at Lausanne. Often there seemed no way out. Had this Conference failed, it would have meant the failure and hopeless destruction of the last shreds of faith in the minds of statesmen. But because a successful outcome was so urgently necessary to all, again and again the threads were taken up and knitted together.

"At this juncture in my explanation, I would like to thank the homeland in the name of the German Government. The model behaviour of the whole German populace in these difficult weeks has given us the power and the courage to fight untiringly always with our goal before our eyes. How often in German history has a belief in a better future come true! To thank the German people for that, is my utmost urge in this hour.

"In order to realize the value of the Lausanne Agreement, one must take a look at the consequences of a non-successful outcome. The breakdown of this Conference would have rendered impossible any economic recovery in Germany. There was also the danger of economic contraction in German life, increasing unemployment with all its consequences, accompanied by a great increase in social tension. The failure to clear up this question of reparations would have continued the dependence on foreign countries, would have left open the possibility of sanctions and would have made impossible any political appeasement, particularly between the two main members—France and Germany.

"The difficulties which would accrue from this internal and external breakdown, would have pushed Germany into the abyss and once more the ring of victorious Powers would have closed around us. The German Government therefore worked untiringly for the success of the Lausanne Conference, but only to achieve a result which is in har-



mony with the economic ability of Germany and compatible with the dignity and honour of such a great Nation.

"And what is the result? The aim of the Lausanne Conference, the perfect wiping away of reparations, has been reached. In no form whatever will Germany have to pay reparations from 1 July 1932. The Young Plan has gone. Payments of over thirty-three milliards marks, in annual instalments of two milliards, are done away with.

"And our responsibility? The amounts due in the Hoover-year up to 1 July 1932 will be paid by us, plus a certain contribution towards Belgian rebuilding, altogether not more than three milliard marks. But this responsibility will not be paid in stated fixed annual payments, as up till now, but through special Reich Notes (*Reichsschuldverschreibungen*), which can only come on the world market when the economic balance of Germany has been restored completely. Before that time neither payment nor interest starts on these notes, and at the earliest they cannot be put on the market till three years' time and then only such amount as is warranted by the real economic ability.

"It is of special importance to note that should these Notes not be met on the Foreign Markets within twelve years from now, the whole sum or any balance is wiped out completely.

"The absolute scrapping of reparations completely restores our independence in economic and financial matters. It wipes away all ties of the Young Plan. The Reich recovers complete autonomy over the Reichsbahn (State Railways) and the Reichsbank (State Bank). German credit is placed on a new foundation and with that is implied the recuperation of German economics. We have at no time admitted any connection between the payment of tribute and inter-allied payments, and it therefore naturally follows that the solution of this has nothing to do with the inter-allied payments between the United States and her creditors.

"Politically, the result of the Lausanne Conference means the beginning of a new era among the Nations. The last effort of the Government was intended to give a final proof of our firm will to stand for the rebuilding of world economics and to give all our support to this aim, as far as our strength and position will allow.

"But, and I am saying this in the full knowledge of my responsibility as the head of the Government, this last effort on our part can only have real meaning and value when the present Agreement leads to a clearing up of the political question, which to-day still causes the rights of the German people to be curtailed.

"In the name of Germany, I already to-day announce anew the demand in front of the whole world, as a Nation to stand with equal rights and equal duties and to be treated as such by the whole world. These questions, especially those of war guilt and defence freedom, have been closely discussed by the statesmen. Now the questions, which are directed in the interest of German honour, will be thrown up in the world forum.

"The new chapter that is opening to-day for the German people, the restored freedom and the independence from other countries will make it possible, from now on, for the German Government to fight for political freedom also. Our road, which has now reached the economic liquidation of the war, will and must lead to peace and honour. In that I know to-day the German Government is in agreement with the whole of the German people."

While securing these concessions from the Powers at Lausanne, von Papen had already intimated that he intended to press later for an increase in Germany's armed forces. He achieved great advantage for Germany at Lausanne, but the personality of Brüning and his precise statement of Germany's case had done much to prepare the minds of the delegates favourably to receive his demands. As in the case of Brüning's success at Geneva, which was never pursued and ratified, for the obvious reason that the powers had come to see the truculent change that was coming over Germany, von Papen's conduct of affairs was bitterly critized by the Catholics and the Nazis.

The Catholics attacked him because he had split them and then deserted from the Centre (they forgot that he was thrown out) while the Nazis assailed him for not extracting more from Geneva.

The repeal of the ban on the Nazi storm troops had alarming results. Everywhere the *Sturmabteilungen* beat

to quarters and harried the Papen Government in every corner of the Reich. The troops of the other three "armies" contested their presence in the streets, and in Altona on one day alone, seventeen persons were killed as a result of a brawl between various political factions.

. . . . .

Then began a drama which the outside world has failed properly to comprehend. Acts of violence perpetrated by the rowdies of all Parties without exception became such a menace that decree after decree was promulgated forbidding marches and demonstrations and banning meetings. The South German States refused to recognize the Reich Government's decrees repealing the ban of the S.A., and that Bavaria, which had given nourishing support in 1923 to the squawling infant movement, now came out in open antagonism to the National Socialists.

Minister after Minister throughout the various States declared that they would only surrender to force. No one knew to what they were expected to surrender, but it sounded brave, especially when reminded of an empty cash-box.

The Chancellor called a meeting of the Prime Ministers of these recalcitrant States, over which the President of the Reich presided. Held, the Prime Minister of Bavaria, became the spokesman for the Southern States and accused von Papen of trying to foist a scheme on them which meant the swallowing-up of the smaller States by already over-gorged Prussia. The South German States did not want unity as von Papen saw it, for it imposed, as Held said, ". . . unendurable burdens and disturbed the people who wanted to remain semi-autonomous as they were, under the Weimar Constitution." The South German States accused von Papen of surrendering to the brownshirts, whose new freedom they would oppose.

"Even if this freedom is the wish of the Government?" asked von Papen. "If the Government continue to be blind to this danger, then yes, since the safety of the State depends upon it," came readily from Held.

Hindenburg was infuriated at this mutiny—against his Chief of Staff, as he once spoke of his Chancellor. Dr.

Held would please understand that Herr von Papen had his complete confidence and he could take it that von Papen's policy was his policy also. Nothing daunted, Held returned the Field-Marshal's fire. "Was there any truth in the rumour that it was intended to withdraw police authority from all the States and vest it in the Reichs Government?"

With the decree for this very contingency in draft, von Papen looked Held straight in the eye and replied that no such act was contemplated, but if the Government should have to do so, he could personally guarantee that control would never pass into the hands of a National Socialist Minister. Held appeared to be doubtful, for in 1932 there were already National Socialist administrations in Thuringia and Brunswick, so Hindenburg hastened to confirm his Chancellor's undertaking, concluding, "so long as I am in office these bandits will never get their hands on the police force."

The time when a man's word counted for anything in German politics had long passed. To break one's word was the hall-mark of a skilful politician. The German people, the Reichstag and the Constitution no longer mattered. The ultra-Nationalists were going to see to it that the first Junker Chancellor in Republican Germany kept his seat in the saddle.

The *Herrenklub*, which by now was really the Chancellery, it seemed, decided to take a hand and a circular was sent out to "All social and political associations of men of goodwill in Germany." It was rather an interesting document. ". . . an important fact to be noticed is that the Chancellor himself is a member of the committee of the *Herrenklub* and that Herr von Braun and Herr von Gayl<sup>1</sup> are likewise members of the club. Herr von Schleicher, the Minister for War, belongs to an affiliated club and the new Finance Minister<sup>2</sup> is also one of our frequent visitors.

"Our general opinion of the Papen Cabinet may be gathered from our articles in *Der Ring*. But perhaps you will be interested in the broadcast speech which Herr von

<sup>1</sup> Von Braun was Minister of Agriculture and Food. Von Gayl was Home Secretary.

<sup>2</sup> Count von Schwerin-Krozick, a former Oxford Rhodes Scholar.

Gleichen<sup>1</sup> made on the evening after the formation of the Cabinet. I also enclose a copy of a letter in which Herr von Gleichen has communicated his view of the situation to a well-known publicist at present residing abroad.

"At the approaching election it will be particularly difficult for the people most closely connected with our circle to vote for any of the existing parliamentary parties. The duty of our class is to awaken the country to the necessity and the autonomous rights of the præsidential Cabinet as at present constituted. Such general approval neither excludes criticism of separate members of the Cabinet, nor can it jeopardize our continued intellectual collaboration in the practical problems which are presented to the Government for solution."

Those who received and read this circular realized that things were going to move. When they turned to the enclosed letter, written by Herrn von Gleichen, they saw that such an effort was worthy of their support. This letter, a very verbose document, contained many curious statements and if it had been published at the time, the *Herrenklub* house would have gone up in a far bigger and more spontaneous bonfire than the Reichstag did six months later. ". . . while von Papen is the ostensible head of the Cabinet, the real leader is von Schleicher, the Minister of War. The new Cabinet is not only tolerated by the National Socialists, but has the explicit approval of their leader. Nor must it be thought that the new Cabinet is merely an emergency Cabinet, as the Press falsely reports, but will most certainly be confirmed in power by the new Reichstag, or at least by the party, which according to all indications, will be the strongest. In return, the National Socialists will be allowed free play in the various States, and certain intentions also exist concerning Prussia, that is, for the appointment of an approved man as Premier or Reichs Commissioner, and the reorganization of its internal administration with the powerful collaboration of the National Socialist movement."

Naturally, the Chancellor did not take kindly to the

<sup>1</sup> Secretary and member of the political Committee of the *Herrenklub* and editor of its organ *Der Ring*.

reference which implied that he was a puppet of von Schleicher, but since the more important elements knew that it was the other way round, it did not much matter.

On 20 July the coalition democratic Government of Braun, Severing and Hirtsiefer was forcibly removed. The Chancellor, again invoking Article 48 of the Constitution, ruled alone in Prussia as Reichs Commissioner and appointed Franz Bracht, the Lord Mayor of Essen, to be his executive deputy. By this stroke von Papen had ended the dualism of Prussia and the Reich, and Prussia was now subordinated to the control of Ministers of the Reich. At least that is what it appeared as, but actually since von Papen's time the "rape" of Prussia meant the subjugation of the whole German Reich to the will of those ruling in Prussia.

The timid Social Democrats accepted the Papen stroke under protest—they said that they would fight this violation of Prussia's rights to the last ditch, but they came to grief at the first fence—the Supreme Court at Leipzig, where the writ they had issued against von Papen, in which he was summoned to show cause to justify his action, was thrown out by the judges. The Social Democrats, realizing that even the judiciary had gone Right, quietly went on holiday, taking their further protests with them. This was typical of Social Democracy and Trade Unionism in Germany in pre-Hitler years. Fighting for rights was too energetic. So, in keeping with the Oriental methods of their politics, the Left and middle parties threw themselves under the juggernaut of reaction. The heroic days of the '48 barricades were forgotten, and the leaders of the workers and the petty bourgeoisie had become mere buyers and sellers of political offices.

This forcible removal of Prussia's elected Government was highly unconstitutional, yet it did much to make the future path of National Socialism easier, for if the Hitler Government later in January of the following year had not found such intensely Nationalist officials in office in Prussia, the taking over of power would not have run so smoothly and easily as it did.

The polling day of the Reichs elections came and, leading up to it, the Government had coerced the masses into

believing that it would employ the Army if any further nonsense appeared to be contemplated. Therefore the elections were held under the threat of a military dictatorship and many millions of votes were given, not to the purely National section which supported von Papen, but to the extreme Left and to the Nazis.

In the light of these conditions the Nazi poll was breathtaking. The electorate returned 230 National Socialist members to the Reichstag, who carried with them 37 per cent of the votes, 13,733,000, all gathered under difficult conditions from a bewildered and half-starved electorate.

The Nazis pressed Hindenburg for the right to office in a præsidial Cabinet, because the elections had proved that von Papen did not enjoy the confidence of the Nation. The promise of support Hitler had made to Papen went the way of other promises, and a little later he publicly stated that circumstances were too strong for him to keep it. But no suggestion came from the Palace, and the matter could not be taken up in the Reichstag because it was on vacation.

At this period, though in an advanced condition of bankruptcy, due to the many elections of the preceding months, the Nazis were politically the strongest by far of all movements in the Reich.

By now von Schleicher had come to be a little weary of working in double harness with von Papen. The War Minister found that Hindenburg's friendship for the Chancellor was stronger than his gratitude to himself. The War Minister was to be found more often in the company of the chiefs of the Nazi Party, and ultimately Hitler and Göring worked out a plan which would satisfy the millions of the rank and file of brownshirts, who were becoming fractious at the non-participation by the Party in the Papen Government. This plan was submitted to von Schleicher and the group immediately around him.

With the support of the Nazis, von Schleicher was to be made Chancellor. Through his friendship with Hindenburg he was to persuade the Field-Marshal to retire and into his place was to step—Adolf Hitler, as President of the Reich. Three or four National Socialist Ministers were to become members of the von Schleicher Cabinet,

the Nazis retaining the right to control the police, while the war department was to remain in duly approved military hands.

The recipients of this plan definitely considered its adoption, but rather shabbily turned it down and passed on the information to others, thereby causing more doubting and heartburnings. This was a typical state of affairs in Germany at the time—a condition which almost wrecked the Nazi Party. But the Nazis had long memories and reprisals were ruthlessly carried out when the movement ultimately gained control in 1933.

Hitler was obsessed by the idea of being the head of an "authoritative Cabinet", but Schleicher, although willing enough to work with him, pointed out the difficulties and suggested that he should be content with becoming Vice-Chancellor.

With the shadow of civil war stalking the land, Hitler called upon Hindenburg on 13 August. The offer of the Vice-Chancellorship was made, but Hitler refused again on the grounds that he must be allowed full powers and the right to dispense with parliamentary rule. To which the President replied that he could not square such a proposal with his conscience. What he had been doing for two years for Brüning—what he was doing for von Papen, his friend—he refused the man with 230 seats in the National Assembly. Directly after this interview Hitler left Berlin for his mountain retreat in Berchtesgaden, while von Papen and Schleicher went to stay with Hindenburg at Neudeck, to think over a threat Göring had just then made. All standing in the way of National Socialism would be ruthlessly destroyed. And von Papen had thought that the Nazis would prove a pillar of strength in his National Government.

At Neudeck the three talked over the difficulties arising out of the administration of the Eastern Land Aid ("*Osthilfe*"), Hindenburg complaining that he was the recipient of huge stacks of complaining letters daily from suffering land owners, who complained that their regular grants to subsidize their farming were not coming to hand. Von Papen ordered the setting up of a sub-committee of the Reichstag to investigate the whole business of the fund,



Schleicher pursuing his own investigations, the result of which, when threatened to be used by him against the clique around the President, destroyed him.

After the rape of Prussia, von Papen was practically deserted by von Schleicher. The War Minister had advised against playing the strong man in Prussia and he was against assisting the East Elbian squires further in the little matter of State subventions for their unfertile and derelict lands. The mad restoration schemes entertained by von Papen literally made Schleicher's blood run cold—the German Navy steaming out to sea to meet the Kaiser at a rendezvous and bringing him in triumph to Berlin—the maddest plan of the lot, was enough to open the door of any madhouse to its sponsor.

The play-acting with the *Stahlhelm*, too, was beginning to excite the interest of certain intelligent foreign journalists in Berlin. He himself had been trapped into appearing at a parade of about sixty thousand of the Nationalists' private army, in company with von Papen, the ex-Crown Prince, von Neurath and many other national leaders.

During the late summer of 1932 von Schleicher carried out many political manoeuvres in attempts to induce Hitler to enter a Cabinet in which there would be no von Papen, but Hitler had the stock reply—all or nothing. If he could be Chancellor, he would even stand Brüning or von Papen as Vice-Chancellor. Von Papen employed much the same tactics to induce the Nazis to accept partial responsibility in his Cabinet, because then if the crash came, he could involve them in his fall and discredit them. On 30 August 1932, the German Reichstag was invaded by 230 Nazi deputies in the brown uniform of the S.A. and the black of the S.S. The last ditch of Democratic Government was being held, but only for a few months. From now on began puppet shows which held the administration of the Reichstag up to ridicule and it was seen that there were only two real factors at work in German politics, Communism of many hues and diehard Nationalism, composed of Nazis and the more advanced members of Hugenberg's

camp. Both these factors sought to bring about revolution. The Communists by underground methods, and the Right by an outward show of legality with the threat of the big stick, poised, but held delicately in reserve.

The Right was bound to succeed because the Nazis, the strongest partner in the National front, were led by a born anti-Democrat, Göring, in who was vested plenary powers. He became the expression of the rule of might against the rumblings of grey theory, while the Left was led by a cohort of logicians in the best Democratic style, in not one of whom was vested the right to act on initiative. What has been held out to be the strength of Democracy, the united will, operated by a committee, proved to be its undoing when faced with the deputed single voice of reaction.

Now von Papen had told Hindenburg that he had received the promise of support from the Hitler movement. Göring, having been elected to the presidency of the Reichstag, confirmed this in his address, but warned the Chancellor that the need for emergency decrees was gone. It implied that the Nazi and Nationalist majority could govern, but this was not what von Papen wanted. ". . . I wish it to be understood that I shall see to it that the honour and distinction of the German people shall not be insulted. The honour of the history of the German people, too, shall find in me a worthy custodian. Before the whole of the German people I expressly state that to-day's meeting has proved clearly that the new Reichstag, through its great majority of able men, is capable of conducting the affairs of State without the Government having need for recourse to emergency measures. The fact that we have a National Cabinet fills my soul with hope that I can discharge my office as President of this Reichstag and that the honour of the people, security of the Nation and the freedom of the fatherland can be the highest guiding stars of all my dealings."

The Nazi leader implied in his words "great majority" that the National Socialists were the "able men, capable of conducting the affairs of State" and von Papen saw that he would have serious opposition to his programme, unless he curbed the Reichstag, so he planned to dissolve it and

rule alone as the President's chief executive. But that could keep, for this meeting of the Reichstag was a purely formal one, to enable the newly-elected deputies to meet the Government and the officials of the Reichstag and to elect the Reichstag officers and standing committees.

These formalities over, its members dispersed to await its reassembling for normal parliamentary business in early autumn.

Leading personalities of the Nazi Party during these troublesome days immediately after the elections were accepted by the Nationalists as "equals". The *Herrenklub* opened its doors to men like Göring, Goebbels, Roehm and Helldorf, who were often to be seen at evening sessions listening with undisguised cynicism to the perorations of Schleicher, Oldenburg-Januschau (Court Chamberlain to Wilhelm II), von Alvensleben and von Gleichen on the future of a new Germany which would extend from Paris to the Ukraine and from the Baltic to the Adriatic. The gentlemen of the inner council of this club considered what with due lickspittling these lights of the Nazi hierarchy could be weaned from Hitler (who was sulking in his mountain retreat) and used as additional props for the Government of National Concentration.

On the last day in August, Hindenburg had been prevailed upon to grant full powers to von Papen, enabling him to rule without reference to the Reichstag. He announced that the Reichstag could go on, but it must be submissive to his Chancellor—otherwise it would be dissolved. The Prussian gentleman who had spoken so contemptuously of Hitler's promises, had forgotten his own "solemn vow" to preserve the Constitution, while his Chancellor had utter disregard for his undertakings to the Nazis and Nationalists alike.

Goebbels threatened in his paper *Angriff* to impeach the President for this violation of the Constitution, while von Schleicher went on leave to avoid being drawn into the argument. Göring, furious that he had been trapped by von Papen's earlier promises into espousing publicly in his Reichstag speech the aims of the National Cabinet,

convened the Reichstag for 12 September, with a view to calling upon the House to depose the Government for its violation of the Constitution.

The Chancellor, nervous at the fury of the Nazi Press and Göring's action, attempted to propitiate the infuriated Nazis by pardoning those Nazis who were under sentence of death for the notorious Potempa murder—those to whom Hitler was "joined in this terrible judgment of blood"—five storm troopers who had beaten a man to death before the eyes of his wife and children.

The gloves were off and the Nazis showed that whatever Hitler had arranged with von Papen, they would not stand idly by and tolerate such a surrender.

On 9 September Göring and Graeff, president and vice-president of the Reichstag respectively, called upon the President of the Reich to inform him of their official appointments. This ceremony was similar to a British Minister kissing hands on appointment. Göring officially informed Hindenburg that a working majority of Nazi and Centre deputies existed in the new Reichstag and that it was desirable for this majority to form a Government. The President replied that he would not tolerate another majority Government and Graeff, the Nationalist, desiring to justify his position with the Field-Marshal and with the Chancellor, reminded the Nazi Reichstag president that an official of the Reichstag was without authorization to conduct political negotiations concerning the formation of Governments direct with the head of the Reich, behind the backs of the deputies and without their knowledge and consent.

Hindenburg coldly replied that he was satisfied with Herr von Papen's policy, which was his policy.

With the knowledge of Göring's call upon the President, and his avowal to appeal to the Reichstag to dismiss the Government, von Papen was now firmly resolved to use the dissolution decree obtained earlier from the President; he also talked of again proscribing the storm troops, but thought better of it.

On 12 September the Nazi faction trooped into the Reichstag primed with orders on the debate and vote. The Government had one motion down—which approxi-

mated to a statement of its policy. Before the business before the House could begin, however, Ernst Torgler, a Communist deputy, moved a division of the House on the grounds of no confidence in the Government. Göring put the motion to the Reichstag and it was accepted by the whole House. A Nazi deputy, Dr. Wilhelm Frick, moved the adjournment of the House for a short while and this was agreed upon.

This came as a happy respite to both Göring and von Papen. To Göring, the Torgler motion had rather stolen his thunder—the Communist looked as if he would be the champion of the Germans, and the lull gave him an opportunity to consult with Hitler. Von Papen, whose career was filled with such forgetfulness, from cheque-book counterfoils showing payments to secret agents in friendly countries to which he was accredited, to secret despatches left for the enemy to find, had left the dissolution decree in the Chancellery, and while Göring rushed to take counsel with Hitler, he drove to the Wilhelm Strasse to collect the only weapon he possessed against the hostile Reichstag.

Upon von Papen's return the sitting of the House had been resumed. Nevertheless he requested leave to speak, but Göring turned a deaf ear to his appeal, because a division was in progress. "You can see for yourself that the vote is being counted," Göring said, whereupon the Chancellor waved his red portfolio containing the dissolution decree above his head and laid it upon the President's table and left the chamber, accompanied by all his Ministers.

The result of the vote announced that the Government had been defeated by 513 to 32. Having announced this result, Göring picked up the dissolution decree and read it to the House, remarking that a Government that was being dismissed by an almost unanimous vote of the Reichstag could no longer issue effective decrees.

This, of course, did not hold water, because the decree was signed by the President who made and unmade Governments. However, the incident gave sufficient material for a slanging match between Göring and von Papen, which enlivened the political arena of Germany and gave considerable amusement to foreign diplomats

and correspondents. Göring declared in the heat of the moment that he would call the Reichstag for the next day. The Government's answer was to call out all the police reserves, the Berlin garrison and to march four extra battalions of infantry into Berlin from the Brandenburg command.

An interesting commentary on the state of affairs in Germany at this time is shown by an apparently Government-inspired notice in *Vorwärts*, dated 11 September 1932, which ran: "The Government assert that it did not intend to dissolve the Reichstag. Any assertion to the contrary lacks foundation." It was apparent that the Government was being conducted in hour-by-hour stages. Life in Berlin had its sorrows, but it also had its compensations. The people, like the cat, could laugh at its Government in the absence of a King.

The dissolution of the Reichstag a fact, the new elections were scheduled for 6 November. The Nazis were furious in their attacks upon the Chancellor, for funds were running low, exhausted as they had been by a succession of wearing-down elections. The Reichswehr took themselves off to manœuvres beyond the Oder line and around the Rhine, so that East and West, the last props of von Papen's power, were dissipated in an endeavour to remain aloof from the disorder into which many of its dashing schemers had encouraged him, by sycophantic agreement with his schemes for German hegemony. While the "blues" and the "Reds" were theoretically winning the next war, von Papen was fighting a forlorn hope against his erstwhile allies.

There is no doubt that the Nazis were at all times in agreement with his Nationalism, but they strongly objected to his interpretation of it and his predilection for intrigue. The strong men of the Nazi movement realized that while they could use von Papen as a collaborator, they could not acknowledge him as leader. Papen was afraid that the Nazis would injure his proposed Holy Roman Empire of the Western Germans if allowed too much authority.

So the two elements, so necessary to each other if either was to succeed, through jealousy and mistrust, drew apart in those fateful autumn days in 1932, when the Germans

were going to the devil, with the aid of about fifty political parties and splinter sects.

In his *Aufbau einer Nation*, Hermann Göring gives the key to the Papen situation: “. . . we had warned Chancellor von Papen, we had explained to him that we were compelled to attack him, not for personal reasons, but because of the post he wished to fill. Again and again we explained to him that there was only one solution, and that was to make Hitler Chancellor. . . . And so the last struggle against Papen began. From a personal point of view we were sorry, for we thought highly of him as a patriot and a man; but politically the struggle was an unavoidable necessity”, and continuing, when writing of von Schleicher: “. . . but for Schleicher we had not the personal sympathy that we had for Papen.” These words imply that only one thing separated von Papen and Hitler—the Chancellorship—the embodiment of political power in the German Reich.

When von Papen saw that the Nazi movement were masters of the streets and therefore of the situation, he was content to serve as number two in the Third Reich, for after all, he felt that it would become his Reich—the Reich of the Western Germans. If he could not rule over it then Hitler seemed to him the next best man, and that contingency seemed to have been provided for early on, for Göring, again in his *Aufbau einer Nation*, records: “I also got Herrn von Papen, as had been previously arranged, to retire from his post of Commissioner for Prussia in order that the Leader could give the post to me.” Thereby proving beyond all doubt that von Papen, denied the glory of leadership, was content to become a trustee for Hitler’s Reich against the time of the coming of the lord, to whom he would hand the sceptre and render account of his trusteeship.

. . . . .

Von Papen, although in the throes of an election fight and while he had not submitted it to the Reichstag (except on the order papers) prior to its dissolution, commenced to put into operation much of the economic part of his programme and it will be seen that the whole of it has since been taken over by the Third Reich and adopted

as part of its policy, and the world has been told that these are Hitler's own original ideas.

By giving subsidies to employers for new men put into work and by issuing tax rebate coupons to industrialists, he hoped to remove burdens from industry and to alleviate unemployment. A considerable public works programme was planned, which included the irrigation of semi-fertile lands, the improvement and extension of the Canal system, at which administrations had pecked since the days of Frederick the Great, and regulations of rivers and harbours.

The palliative of all Governments was not forgotten—subsidies for new houses intended for owner-occupiers, the subsidizing of garden suburbs and small-holdings, the repairing of main trunk roads and the laying out of new traffic arteries. In order to create fresh demands for labour and materials, the Government undertook to bear a part of the cost of repairing and redecorating flats and houses, whether privately owned or not.

While none of these plans could be said to be original, von Papen can at least claim to have produced more popular suggestions than preceding Chancellors, and it can readily be understood why most of these projects were greedily seized upon by the rulers of the Third Reich when taking power. While these plans might well have been the original ideas of von Papen, as certain aspects of them indicate the Papen touch in the desire for a wide canvass, it might also have been possible for him to have found them in draft left behind by Brüning in a file in the Chancellery. In any case this constructive side of von Papen was a far cry from the sabotage of 1915—it seemed as if he really thought that man was not glorified by what he destroyed, but by the things of his creation. But that was another passing phase of his dilettantism.

In the middle of October, obsessed by the optimism of a coming victory at the polls, he drew up plans for the legal reform of the Constitution and submitted them, not to the Department of Justice and to the permanent legal officials of the Reichstag, but to the inner council of the *Herrenklub*. The plans, among other things, included the permanent union of Prussia with the Reich, thereby



validating his arbitrary action in throwing out the Prussian Ministers and deposing the Diet; the restriction of the franchise to abolish the anomaly of the "boy and girl vote", and to combine a new form of proportional representation with the idea of voting for only a single candidate. This would have broken the impasse of many elections, for under the then existing system the vote was split and through the type of P.R. system in vogue unknown candidates and meaningless Parties obtained blocks of votes which would otherwise have been given to the larger Parties and this on many occasions robbed the largest Party of a working majority and caused a second election.

Papen maintained that these innovations would remove the Party caucus, forgetting that the *Herrenklub* was caucusdom personified. In order to avoid any further challenge to his authoritative rule, he inserted a clause in his plan which provided that the Government was not subject to the Reichstag, but held office from the personal goodwill of the President. This was greeted with enthusiasm by the *Herrenklub*, for as Papen's Cabinet was virtually one of its committees, its members, many of whom were personal friends of the Hindenburgs' and Palace Clique, saw the Junker camarilla permanently enthroned in the management of the Reich.

The knowledge of the existence of this new plan to be put into operation by the Chancellor, decided the Nazi leaders upon a policy of uncompromising relentlessness against von Papen's nominees in the elections, but their efforts were abortive, because the Party itself was again in the throes of domestic and financial difficulties. Roehm, the chief of the staff of the S.A., had been chatting over his Left leanings with Strasser and mutterings were being heard among the rank and file. Von Papen, to whom promises came lightly, forgetful of those he had made to Hitler, took upon himself the duty of making a tour of the Rhineland and the Ruhr in order to impress upon the Nazi backers in those districts the patriotic need of withholding further finance from the National Socialist election fund. In this he was successful, for the Nazi deficit after the elections ran into millions of marks.

Hoping to find another way of placating the angry Nazis and rendering his policy more acceptable to them for a future collaboration after the elections (for he saw by now that the state of the Parties was rapidly reaching an impasse), von Papen threatened to withdraw from the League of Nations. As it was he did not send a German delegation to the Disarmament Conference. The only reaction from the Nazis came from their Party Press, which shouted in Dr. Goebbels' inimitable style that this was a step long delayed.

During the year 1932 the Nazi movement had a slogan: "*Hib-Aktion*", an abbreviation of "*Hinein in die Betriebe*" (into the factories), and this slogan was actually converted into fact. Meetings were held in as many factories as speakers could be found for, in an attempt to win more workers to the cause of National Socialism. The policy had accounted for the overwhelming result at the July elections, but the apparent futility of waiting for the Nazis to take power by legal methods led to a considerable falling off of votes, and not all the personality of a thousand Hitlers, Görings and Goebbels could move the electorate further.

The fighting and the bitter disappointments of this year had worn every headquarters and area leader down to breaking point. The dissension in the camp had also become known. The more Nationalist or even Monarchical elements in the movement had heard of the activities of a certain General Dommès, who was intriguing with Reichswehr circles in an attempt to pave the way for a triumphal return to Germany of the ex-Kaiser. Another Nazi, Count Spretti, in association with Count von Alvensleben, had founded a Kaiser Party in Berlin and rumour was busy with the name of Göring in this connection. The ordinary members of the Nazi Party viewed with mistrust the presence of the Hohenzollern Princes as district leaders in the movement, and asked outright: "What did it all mean?" Both Hitler and Göring retorted that they had no time for monarchs, and the events down to the time of writing appear to prove that this at least is true about Nazi policy. A whole sequence of disturbing incidents and internal causes then appeared to have conspired against the Nazi movement in these winter days.

New decrees had been promulgated in which political murders were punishable by death, and long terms of imprisonment could be meted out to offenders for breach of the emergency laws. This made irresponsible persons in all parties sit up and think, but the terror of the streets was in no measure abated and the police were never on hand at the time of the affrays.

The Harzburger Front was also cracking and the Nazi Press and the Hugenberg Press entered into a competition of recrimination. Whole district organizations broke down, due to the disagreement now patent between the heads of the National Socialists and the sub-leaders of Left inclination.

Strikes and riots were on the increase throughout the whole of the Reich; the ex-enemy countries had pushed the problem of reparations on one side and were daily expecting Germany to burst out in open revolution or for a military *coup d'état* by the Reichswehr. Those with large investments in the country almost prayed for the latter solution.

At the beginning of November, just a bare week from the day of the poll, a transport strike broke out in Berlin and paralysed the city. This strike was supported by Göring as the Nazi leader in the Reichstag, and by Goebbels as Berlin district leader, whereupon the Socialist Press denounced the action of Bolshevism. Goebbels' slogan was "The blackleg is no patriot" and the industrialists, who rather fancied the "*Kleine Doctor*" as a strike breaker, became furious at this defection. So that was for what they had subsidized the Nazi movement and Press. Herr von Papen was right. No more money.

The Nazis were accused of fomenting the strike. A tense atmosphere prevailed in Berlin and because of the wild rumours that were fast spreading, the people came out into the streets in black swarms. Apprehension was everywhere apparent—when would the Reichswehr come?

The Trade Unions endeavoured to call off the strike, but the Nazis persuaded the workers to stay out, with the result that the shopkeeping and lower middle classes were scared away from voting at the coming elections. The Nazis were making a desperate bid, for they knew that they must either come to power soon or perish as a move-

ment. Every well of finance had been tapped, and by now they were either all dry or had been padlocked by the scared industrialists, who had become frightened at their filibustering "tools". But Goebbels wrote in his diary on 3 November, when referring to this strike and the timidity of the middle classes: "but this is only temporary. They are easily regained; but once the workman is lost, he is lost for ever." The insidious Nazi method is thus made self-apparent. Every weapon was seized upon to appeal to the masses and to embarrass Papen.

Von Papen called upon the War Ministry to support him in a declaration of martial law to break the strike, but Chancellor or no Chancellor, the Reichswehr chiefs gave him to understand that they would not allow the Army to be mixed up in an industrial dispute. As can be seen, the Reichswehr considered itself an *élite* and aloof organization. It would move only when its own interests were threatened, or possibly at the command of the Field-Marshal in the President's Palace.

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"Man cannot exist without authority, and yet authority brings with it as much error as truth. It perpetuates in the individual what ought to be transient for individuals; it repudiates and dissipates what ought to be frankly retained; and it is the chief reason why mankind does not advance." These words of Goethe made fitting epitaph for von Papen's short-lived rule as Chancellor. Authority and the struggle to maintain it had weakened him personally and had discredited his Government. The whole Catholic community was against him, the Nationalists were now doubtful of his personal ability and strength to carry on the National crusade, the Communists and Socialists hated him and the National Socialists had turned against him because he would not keep his word, and would not be convinced that a National Socialist Germany with Hitler at its head was infinitely preferable to a Germany of polyglot Nationalists and Junkers led by himself.

The results of the elections were declared on 6 November and showed a loss of two million votes by the Nazis,

accompanied by a drop in representation of thirty-three seats. Most of the lost National Socialist votes went to the Communist and Nationalist Parties. These results proved that while the Nazis had lost way, von Papen's stock had not risen. His policy had alienated the Nazis from the Nationalist front and they had decided to work alone to achieve office.

The Left forces had increased in strength against, not only Papen, but the whole political system including Hindenburg; and the Centre Party was hand in glove with them in their resolve. Hence the Nazi charge of the "black rats consorting with the God-denying reds".

Despite the fact that all Parties were against von Papen, he nevertheless was allowed to continue in the Chancellorship.

The Government declared a political armistice until 2 January of the coming year and the comicality of the German situation, where every politician in or out of office declared that he would fight for his ideas or his Party, was such that no doughty warrior defied the Government's *Burgfrieden* order.

During the early part of this political truce, Hitler was either in Munich or in the mountains; Göring was missing from his usual haunts and Goebbels was reorganizing the Party machinery. Von Papen was spending difficult hours with Hindenburg, who was beginning to think that the gallant Uhlan, who so often entertained him with stories of America and of German military shortcomings in Asia Minor, would have to follow his other Chancellors. Upon Göring's return to Berlin it was learned that he had been to Rome and had been received by Mussolini and by the Secretary of State in the Vatican. He announced that he had told the Vatican that Nazi-ism "stood for positive Christianity". A week later the leaders of Catholic political action in the Reich announced their intention of supporting Hitler in his demand for the Chancellorship.

The Nationalists refused any form of discussion with Hitler, but von Papen repeatedly sent written requests to the Nazi headquarters for a personal meeting between Hitler and himself, all of which remained unanswered. Hitler had made himself scarce again. He was at Weimar

and would see no one but Göring and Goebbels. So, slighted by his own supporters and spurned by the Hitler whom he had thought to be tamed, he continued his unsteady career as Chancellor for a few more weeks, like an elephant on a rope suspension bridge, not knowing when the strands would break and throw him into the abyss below.

The leaders of the various Parties, such as Kaas of the Centre, Hugenberg of the Nationalists, and Hitler, were summoned to the President's Palace with a view to arriving at some useful and permanent coalition. Many writers have assumed what took place between Hitler and Hindenburg; most have written screeds of scurrilous stories about that interview, but the fact remains that it was a man-to-man session, lasting one hour, at which not even Meissner, the State Secretary, or Colonel Oskar von Hindenburg, the President's son and personal adjutant, were present.

On 21 November, in response to an urgent telegram, Hitler called again on the President, and his triumphal progress through the streets of Berlin to the Palace would have led the world to believe that he was going to be offered the Crown and not just the Chancellorship on Hindenburg's terms. On this occasion, in addition to Hindenburg and Hitler, Oskar von Hindenburg and Otto Meissner represented the State, and Göring and Frick represented the Nazi Party.

The Nazi deputation refused to accept office on Hindenburg's terms, whereby he was insistent that von Papen's programme be taken over *en bloc* and that there was to be no question of majority in the Reichstag and such-like Democratic ideas. The negotiations broke down, the Nazi deputation repeating what by now must have sounded like a refrain from a music-hall song, that they would only take office with Hitler as the head of an authoritative Cabinet, free to put into operation the full National Socialist programme. While this meeting produced deadlock, in his official letter to Hitler, regretting that he could not agree to the Nazi suggestion, Hindenburg showed that he was gradually coming round to the inevitability of a Nazi Government, when he concluded that his door "would be always open".

During the next few days the Hindenburg residence took on the appearance of a Eucharistic congress, so many Prelates and politicians thronged the corridors and ante-rooms, but out of all this medley of scheming, plotting, intrigue and counter-intrigue, nothing materialized. For several weeks the Reich had been without a Cabinet, now it was minus its Chancellor, for the President, impatient at the inability of his friend and favourite to gather a fresh group of "National Concentrationists" around him, which would take on the courtesy title of Government, and furious with the plebeian Hitler's insistent suggestions, dismissed Franz von Papen, the Junker diplomat, soldier and intriguer, who was incapable of holding down an office protected by his President because his opponents fought for need of income, and he surrendered through surfeit of cash, dilettantism and an inflated idea of his own importance and ability.

While Hitler had been importuning the aged Field-Marshal with his suit and von Papen had been scheming in vain to bring Hitler to the point of collaboration with him, another element had crept into the limelight and had emerged with the glory—the Socialist General.

Ever since August, Schleicher had been disloyal to von Papen, hoping to use Hitler to destroy Papen's power, just as Papen had been seeking Hitler's aid for his own ends. For months the War Minister had been mining his way under Papen, and by seeing that certain Ministries were occupied by his clique rather than by Papen's (although the Chancellor thought that they were his friends, because he had appointed them), he was enabled by the end of November to explode the charges. Perhaps it would be better to say that von Schleicher torpedoed him, for there was a joke current in political circles at that time in Berlin—"Von Schleicher should have been an Admiral, for his best ability lies in shooting under water."

With eternal prattle about high politics, lot of the people, and an implied suggestion that he could have shown Moltke, Schlieffen, Ludendorff and the rest a thing or two in military strategy, Schleicher had so bemused his brother officers, the heavy industrialists and Hindenburg's landowner friends into believing that he was an astute

politician as well as a strong man, that they suggested, since von Papen could no longer hold the fort, his appointment as Chancellor and Minister of War.

These were sentimental times in Germany, what with sobbing political leaders, who threatened to blow their brains out if things went wrong and a President who sighed "Thank God; I can now have a Cabinet of my friends"; that self-same President who, on parting with von Papen, gave him a portrait of himself autographed: "*Ich hatt' einen Kameraden. Hindenburg.*"

Franz von Papen, unlike the bourgeois Brüning, needed no reminder, "as between officers", that he had to go because of the President's "name and honour in history".

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On 2 December Kurt von Schleicher, who up till now had been content with political wire-pulling and acting as a negotiator and intermediary for friends, took the plunge. Against his will, as he whispered to friends, he accepted the President's invitation to become Chancellor and Minister of Defence. He undertook to retain von Papen's programme.

Hitler had just entered a sanatorium, Göring was left to carry on and Gregor Strasser was conspiring against both, having arranged to take over to the new Government a large section of disgruntled Left Nazis in the Reichstag.

Von Papen, ever forgetful, remained in residence at the Reichs-Chancellery and the new Government did not remember to ask him to leave. The new Chancellor continued the Papen policy inasmuch as he also tinkered with the Constitution, black-mailed the Nazis with the threat of dissolving the Reichstag, but forgot to keep an eye on von Papen, who had retreated to reorganize his ideas.

Hindenburg (or rather Hindenburg's advisors, but he signed the decrees) took control over the Chancellor and a spate of new decrees were issued, for which von Schleicher got the blame, being repeatedly reproached by the Parties with making worse breaches of the Constitution than von Papen.

The huge membership of the Nazi Party, being naturally



unaware of the intrigue that was about to commence to put Hitler in the seat of the mighty, became more despondent than ever. These millions had really believed the Nazi promises and their minds had become enslaved to the "blood and soil" theories and the Socialist programme of the Party, as contained in the twenty-five "unalterable points" of that programme, drawn up seven years before. The staunchest members began to lose interest—they had fought for a political and National idea for ten years, and now they saw opportunists receiving high Party office over their heads—and the more headstrong began to make themselves a greater nuisance to the Party leaders and to the police.

The leaders of business became apprehensive of Schleicher's policy and the uncertainty of the Nazi Party's position. Hindenburg received many influential men, all of whom endeavoured to make him see the necessity for either a dictatorship of an autocratic Cabinet of men called by him to office without reference to the Nation, or a compromise with Hitler. At any rate, they all impressed upon him the urgent need for unity to the outside world, which was becoming suspicious.

Hitler had already taken full advantage of Hindenburg's invitation to "look in any time you have a suggestion to make". He laid a programme before the President, undertaking to increase the rate of German rearmament and to educate the German youth, through his organization to an early understanding of the need for completely freeing Germany from the Treaties. The ultimate object being to ensure that Germany would be so strong that she could assert her right, not necessarily by war, but rather by the threat of war, to a breaking away from Versailles and to stand on terms of complete equality with the Great Powers, preparatory to the pursuit of a policy of expansion. A new agrarian policy was also projected, which envisaged agriculture as a reserve trench in any emergency. Leading up to any such eventuality, the land had to be made a paying proposition.

This was a complete reversal of Brüning's policy, which the President had termed "agrarian Bolshevism",

and these two main points of the new Nazi idea commended themselves to him and had great weight in swaying his decision of January 1933.

At the end of November the Nazi Press published a provisional ministerial list in the event of power being offered to the movement. Chancellor, Hitler; Air Minister, Göring; Defence, von Schleicher; Foreign Affairs, von Neurath; Finance Ministry, Schacht; Home Affairs, Strasser; Economics (Board of Trade), Thyssen; Justice, Frick; Commissioner for Prussia, von Papen.

This showed that on the one hand, Hitler was prepared to pander to Hindenburg's oft-repeated demands that von Papen must be kept in the Government, and on the other hand that von Papen was moving to a resumption of the relations of early summer. He was already possessed of the means to make Hindenburg amenable to a Hitler Government, if Hitler on his side would only prove agreeable; but he had yet to spin a few more threads to his web before it was tight enough to hold the big fly in the Palace and the younger fly from Munich.

Still the Presidential Palace frowned upon handing Germany over to the Nazi Party. Then the big guns of business were brought up again to effect some sort of decision. Dr. Wilhelm Cuno, the then chairman and managing director of the Hamburg American Line, pointed out to the President the effect unstable political conditions in Germany, with its consequently low level of foreign trade, were having on the German merchant marine. Hindenburg, fickle as a maid, would still have none of Hitler, although he was ever anxious to parley with him. ". . . I fear that a præsidential Cabinet led by Herrn Hitler would inevitably develop into a Party dictatorship, with the evil result of intensifying still more the dissensions within the German Nation, and I cannot answer to my oath and my conscience for taking such a step."

So what his oath forbade in November, it allowed in January. Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, so old and so out of touch with the real life of the German people, guided only by the Palace clique, who wished to see as far as was humanly possible their own Junkerdom in the saddle, was,

through no fault of his own, completely blind and deaf to the flames licking higher and higher.

When the new Reichstag met on 6 December, Hindenburg was surprised that the Generals had turned against him. The Nazi Party boasted many dug-out Generals among its deputies and one after another they took up the chant against the Field-Marshal. "They were unwilling to put power into the Leader's hands. The President of the Reich, who gave full power to such men as Brüning and von Papen, refused to give it to one whom millions regard as the greatest and the best in contemporary Germany. It is to be hoped that Hindenburg will not be accursed for having driven the German people to despair and handed them over to the clutches of Bolshevism, when the saviour stood ready to hand."

When reminded, in the Press next day, of the need for loyalty and comradeship to the aged President, one equally aged General retorted: "During all the time that I have known Herrn von Hindenburg, from the Cadet Academy days to the Great War, when I was his subordinate, Herr von Hindenburg has never shown to me a spark of loyalty or comradeship."

Göring closed the Reichstag meeting by telling the deputies that their life as a parliament would be very short—a few weeks at the most.

What did he know? Nothing less than that von Papen had given Hitler the means to induce Hindenburg to give him office—the findings of the committee on the Eastern Land Aid scandals. That does not sound very formidable, but a peep into the report shows quite a lot.

The *Osthilfe*, as it was known, was originally intended to alleviate the sufferings of small-holders and peasant proprietors in East Prussia. Supplementary to this fund was a special bank, which had been created to carry out, through agriculture, payments on the Dawes Loan. The report, now in Herrn Hitler's hands through the kind offices of Herrn von Papen, disclosed that this bank had used its funds almost exclusively to finance East Elbian land-owners, despite the fact that they had been the main opponents of the Dawes Plan, and that these same land-

owners, though contemptuous of the plebeian Governments of the post-war years, had intrigued nearly a half of the *Osthilfe* funds out of the administrators; 69 million marks went to 12,000 peasant proprietors farming 230,000 hectares of land, while 722 Junker estates of 340,000 hectares had swallowed over 60 million marks.

Oldenburg-Januschau, the late Imperial Chamberlain and a neighbour and friend of Hindenburg, had received nearly a million marks from the fund. Even the ex-Kaiser's second wife had the audacity to apply to the fund for a subsidy.

Now on his eightieth birthday President von Hindenburg had been presented with the title deeds of Neudeck by his East Prussian friends, and the organizer of the subscription list had been none other than Oldenburg-Januschau.

A glance through this report was enough to tell von Papen that at last the road to Potsdam was opening before him. But he could not walk that road alone, as the events of his Chancellorship had clearly indicated. In due time, von Papen would let fall to Hindenburg that the secrets of his friends were known to Hitler and Hindenburg would be scared into a Hitler administration, impelled to do so by the awful thought that perhaps the money to buy Neudeck had come from this *Osthilfe* fund, via the late Imperial Chamberlain.

All these things being known to Göring, the right-hand man of Hitler, gave him the confidence to deal so arbitrarily with the Reichstag. Yet he was ready for any emergency—being neither completely trustful of von Papen nor of many of his own Party, which he knew was rent in pieces. He also knew that Gregor Strasser, now sitting before him on a Nazi mandate, had quite eighty deputies behind him ready to go over to the Schleicher Government. The fact that Schleicher had offered, as reward for the wholesale desertion, the Vice-Chancellorship to Strasser, and the plums of office in the Government of Prussia to his fellow backsliders, was also known to him. What was more, Göring knew that the movement owed twelve million marks, and another election fight under such conditions was impossible. He knew that Strasser came to the Reichstag fresh from an audience with Hindenburg. Therefore it

was his intention to arrange for the Reichstag to be prorogued.

On 8 December, two days later, Strasser wrote to Adolf Hitler, officially resigning all association with the Nazi Party, including his office as economic adviser. Hoping to be appointed head of the Party in place of Hitler, he announced in the anti-Nazi Press that "he had gone on leave". Actually Strasser had joined up with the Social Democrats and the Christian Trade Unions, while his brother Otto was in Prague directing a "Paper" attack, not only against the Nazis, but against the German Nation.

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The Reichstag prorogued, never to meet again in a Schleicher Government, the soldier-Chancellor began to lean away from the Right to the Socialists. He unearthed Brüning's plans for extensive land settlement in East Prussia, although he knew that it would bring down the Field-Marshal's wrath upon his head. Power had gone to Schleicher's head, and his own impotence, pulled and pushed about as he was by conflicting forces, urged him to over-ride the President's wishes, in the hope that such attitude would appeal to the masses and thereby secure his Government in office as the most popular one in post-war Germany. Then his dream would come true—a glorified workmen's council at the head of which would be the Army—the Democrat-soldier State.

Hindenburg, hearing of this East Prussian land scheme, became furious but was advised by his son Oskar, who also had a debt to pay, to wait his time.

At fifty only a Colonel in the Army, Oskar von Hindenburg had suggested to von Schleicher that his age and office warranted promotion to General's rank. The "sea-green incorruptible" of the German revolution, not wishing to be reminded of his own sudden jump from a Major on the Staff to full General overnight, replied that there were many other active officers who were due for promotion before he could be considered. Naturally, the Field-Marshal had this retailed to him by his son, and he began to get out of sympathy with his new Chancellor, remember-

ing that his friend Papen had gone through Schleicher's intrigues. Childishly, he would complain to his friends, "They have taken my Papen away from me."

Partly because of the hope held out by von Papen that he would suppress the *Osthilfe* findings if he became Chancellor once more, and partly owing to the affront his military pride had only recently received from the Chancellor and War Minister, Oskar von Hindenburg, in the best tradition of the period, deserted von Schleicher and warmed to Papen.

Two things now occurred which altered the course of German history.

Joachim von Ribbentrop, who after the war had concentrated on making a fortune in the champagne business and marrying the master's daughter, had been for some years the "promoter" of the Hitler movement. Countless millions of marks had flowed into the Nazi exchequer due to Ribbentrop's industrial contacts and persuasive tongue, while he himself had contributed quite considerably to the National Socialist fighting funds. From the time when he had been an officer in Munich, while Hitler was a corporal on political duty, Ribbentrop had, on and off, served Hitler's cause, even to rendering him physical aid during the Kapp Putsch in Berlin, when he smuggled Hitler and Trebitsch Lincoln out of the city up to Munich in a van marked "*Henckel Trocken für jede Gelegenheit*"

In December 1932 the occasion had occurred for von Papen fully to redeem his promise of the Palestine days. Through the jungle telegraph of politics the Hitlerian chiefs had learned that while Papen had agreed to further the cause of Hitler, he would not hesitate to forget that promise if Hindenburg called him again to the Chancellorship. So Ribbentrop was instructed to call upon von Papen and persuade him to forget any ideas he might have about playing the "lone wolf" in the new year. There and then the bargain was thrashed out, but the approaching Christmas festivities rendered any immediate action impossible, in addition to which the none too simple question of finance for the Nazi movement had to be considered in all its perspective.

The other important event was caused by just an ordinary architect, who decided that Bismarck's Palace in the Wilhelm Strasse, now the official residence of the President of the Reich, required considerable repair. Because of their long-standing friendship, von Papen invited Hindenburg to lodge with him in the Reichs Chancellery, until the repairs to the Palace were completed. Hindenburg, in accepting, forgot that his new landlord had in turn no title to his tenancy.

There in the garden, shielded from observation by the high wall at the back overlooking the Tiergarten, the two took their morning constitutional. The President complained of the things Oskar had passed on to him and about the land settlement scheme, and Papen hinted at the scandal of the *Osthilfe*. Very soon, the old man saw what Papen was driving at and the daily chats developed into plans, which saw the light early in the new year.

From the beginning of December the Nazi Party was the centre of disturbance. Naturally not apprised of negotiations of its leaders, the many millions of members of Hitler's movement became a still greater menace to the internal peace of Germany and a danger to their own leaders. A State had grown up within the State, for the many Nazi welfare organizations had almost usurped the duties of those of the National administration, while in certain areas, with or without the approval of the authorities, auxiliary police composed of storm troopers had come into being.

The position became desperate, because these auxiliary formations were all for revolutionary action, but that was not Hitler's policy. Hitler's policy in internal politics, since the abortive Putsch of 1923, had always been that of the Hapsburgs (*Divide et Impera*) whom he had hated so and whose people he was determined to bring into the Reich once he gained power, and that policy has continued in guiding Germany in her relations with all other Powers ever since. Never use force when threats will achieve the desired end. Never use force against others equally strong or stronger, until it is certain that they will not use their force in any case. Never lose sight of the goal to be attained and never ease up once the antagonist starts to retreat from his original position.

Desperation drove Göring, Goebbels and Himmler into forming themselves in a *Junta* to fight the disobedience within the Party, while the Jewish-owned and Socialist Press laughed up their sleeves and made much political capital out of the crisis caused by Strasser's resignation.

Salaries of district leaders were cut down and the rank and file took to the streets more than ever, armed not with black-jacks, but with collecting boxes, which they rattled under the noses of passers-by. The industrial magnates saw their investment in the National Socialist movement dwindling to infinity; many had already written it off their private ledgers. The Strasser group's backsliding detracted from much of the widely advertised unity in the Nazi movement, and many of its most ardent followers grumbled that Hitler should have been content with a small representation in the von Papen and von Schleicher Cabinets, instead of ruining the Party by his insistence upon demands so wholesale. Germany ploughed on through despair, strikes, riots, street fighting, unemployment and a battle royal of the opposing newspapers, to the season of goodwill and peace. How many thousand families starved through that Christmas the world will never know. The municipalities, Party organizations, and welfare associations alleviated the suffering as much as finances would allow, but funds were low and the demands were many.

During the few days between Christmas and the new year political thoughts were relegated to the lumber room, but fear of what the new year would bring haunted the minds of most.

In those days, Göring, as the personal delegate of the Nazi hierarchy, was often in conference with the President of the Reich. Suggestion after suggestion was made by him in an attempt to break the deadlock, to put an end to the uncertainty and to bring his Party to power, for only office could now save the disrupted and bankrupt organization.

Only a miracle could save the Nazis from passing into oblivion. The miracle came when least expected, like all such phenomena, and the miracle man was Franz von Papen, who in turn seemed himself a miracle in the eyes of the Nazi legions, for they had been taught to hate him and all his kind.



## CHAPTER VIII

FRANZ VON PAPEN, having tried and failed to alter the Weimar Republic into an autocratic State a little better than Bismarck's Reich, yet being still determined to achieve power through his idea of the Empire of the Western Germans, hit upon a new plan, which again was not original. He had a wide knowledge of foreign affairs and while he had no particular regard for England and the English, he nevertheless decided to profit by an experiment the Tories, the English counterpart of his *Junkerdom*, had tried with success.

He had seen how in 1931, when the Socialization of England was going on apace, accompanied by the usual faith in international pacifism, social services, opposition to armaments and subsidies to certain vested interests already overgorged with pickings from the exchequer—in fact, very much the same conditions as had led up to the chaos in Germany a year later—the Tories had cried Wolf and had lured MacDonald away from the strongest Socialist administration England had ever had with the bait of comfort and security in his declining years, thereby breaking the power of Labour for at least a decade. If England, in this endeavour to prove to the world that she intended to be the outpost of Conservatism in a rapidly increasing Socialist Europe, could achieve success with such a plan, so could Germany.

With the memory of that last interview with Ribbentrop indelibly impressed upon his mind, he conceived a plan equally brilliant but which in its operation was foredoomed to failure, because, while being a disciple of Machiavelli, he had forgotten the master's words, "The Prince who contributes towards the advancement of another's power ruins his own". Von Papen planned to apply the method

of MacDonaldization on Hitler. Let Hitler have power and destroy himself, through the wielding of it, thought Papen.

That the Prince of betrayers, about to attempt his last betrayal in internal politics, was foiled early on was not due to the existence of any law of average in his art or a sense of justice in the universe, but because his "victim" was an honours graduate of the Machiavelli school, while he had only a pass degree.

But to bring about this position of an apparently authoritative Hitler régime, the while it would really be the puppet of Papen and his clique, the scheming Franz required collaborators, though true, they were not far to seek. He already had the two Hindenburgs sold on his idea, mainly on purely personal grounds, and others, once told of the Presidential part in the conspiracy, were not slow to follow. The ubiquitous Oldenburg-Januschau brought in Count Eberhardt von Kalkreuth, president of the East Prussian Land Association, Alfred Hugenberg was told to forget about the cracked Harzburger Front and join up for the sake of the Nationalist cause, while Fritz Thyssen, already deeply involved financially in both the Nazi and Nationalist camps, thought that he would gain on the big wheel what he had lost on the swings and on the roundabout. Schacht, through his association with Göring and Hitler, was already in the conspiracy and he brought with him all the members of the "*Reichsverband der Industrie*".

By the new year von Papen had collected under one hat the leaders of industry, banking, Press, films and Junker agriculturists, which to him represented his State, for his sympathy for the Catholics and the working man was purely academic. Jesuit-like, he swept from his mind the cobwebs of memory—he was younger when he joined the Centre Party, when he had believed that the State must take heed to the cry of the souls of the Church.

To this band of very wealthy and consequently very patriotic Germans, von Papen outlined his scheme, which if applied to the ordinary politician would have worked, because it implied a cupidity in nature common to most;

it was what the Germans like—*Realismus*—and it was agreed on all hands that it was workable because it sounded reasonable. He explained to them that in view of the rising tide of Communism (although it was January the room became overheated with the perspiration of these men, at the very thought) and the increasing reluctance of the masses to tolerate further Cabinets too obviously authoritarian, something had to be done to present a Cabinet to the people having a semblance of majority support.

As far as he could see, the only support to be looked for, apart from the Nationalists, was the Nazi Party. With the allegiance of that Party any régime could hold office, therefore it was highly necessary to secure that support even at the risk of giving its leader office. Time was short, because already the Nazi Party was torn to pieces—soon it might completely disintegrate and the Roehms, Strassers and Feders might be leading their own factions. Von Papen told the assembled paymasters that he was quite content to serve as Vice-Chancellor under Hitler, for it would not be for long and he and the rest of the Cabinet he had in mind could keep the “Reactionary” in order.

It was desirable that the meeting which would tie Hitler up to the Junker carriage should take place on neutral ground, and again von Ribbentrop proved useful, for he arranged a dinner-party in the Cologne home of Baron von Schroeder, banker and stock-exchange king, and of a race, so it was said, whom Hitler sought to drive out of the economic life of Germany, at which von Papen and Hitler were reconciliated and pledged their vows of friendship to each other and of allegiance to Germany.

This meeting in Cologne took place on the evening of 4 January 1933. It was private, and had never been announced, yet the next day Germany knew of it through the Press. At the time it had no significance to the German masses, but to von Schleicher, whose agents had shadowed the members of the dinner-party to Cologne and reported their ultimate destination, it spoke volumes. The naked fact of this meeting he immediately broadcast to the Press, leaving it to the policy of the individual newspaper to picture the scene how it wished. The *Völkischer Beobachter*

*bachter's* statement asserted that "the initiative for the meeting came from Herrn von Papen, the especial confidant of the President of the Reich".

While the Nazi Press bombarded the Chancellor, von Papen flooded all those officers in the Reichswehr having property, or relations with property, with circular letters informing them that their esteemed chief and Chancellor intended to pursue a policy of agrarian Bolshevism. Schleicher naturally protested at this attempt to suborn the Army and asked the President for a declaration of confidence, to be published in the Press.

Both Oskar von Hindenburg and von Papen advised the President against such a course, as conditions were so uncertain and were not capable of standing any further tension, which would be caused by a Presidential announcement such as Schleicher sought. So the Chancellor had to be content with Hindenburg reminding him of their deep friendship and assuring him that he would always "stand by him as a faithful comrade".

On the same evening von Papen and von Schleicher met in the *Herrenklub*. Reproached with hob-nobbing with Hitler and accused of sending the letters to officers in the Reichswehr, by Schleicher, he denied both. As answer the Chancellor drew two documents from his inner pocket, a photo of the Nazi leader and von Papen meeting in Cologne and a letter signed by von Papen addressed to an officer in the Reichswehr. That did not worry Papen, for he knew that in a few days his intrigues would bear fruit, so he threw away another promise: "Kurt, please believe me in the name of our old friendship and on my word of honour as an officer and a man, when I swear to you that I will never undertake nor sanction any move against you or against any Government of which you are the head."

In March, but two months later, the disillusioned Schleicher said, when speaking of Papen's betrayal, "he proved to be the kind of traitor beside whom Judas Iscariot is a saint". Diamond cut diamond.

The result of von Papen's conspiracy soon began to show. Six days after the Cologne meeting, Kalkreuth

fired his broadside by issuing a statement to the Press castigating and denouncing von Schleicher for his neglect of agriculture and his scheme of land settlement. This caused Schleicher to declare that he would listen no further to Kalkreuth's Land Association, neither would he ever again receive in audience Kalkreuth or any of his committee. This was the very thing necessary to raise the Junkers against the Chancellor. They attacked him without mercy and appealed to Hindenburg to dismiss him, Schleicher in turn demanding from the President the decree to dissolve the Reichstag and thereby allow him to rule by decree.

Hindenburg, well past the years when he understood anything, was pulled this way and that way in the turmoil of what had become known as politics. Living as he was with von Papen, he came to look to him more and more, and Schleicher knew this. He began to think that there was only one way out—to arrest Hitler and von Papen as traitors and to hold the old President as a hostage against the good conduct of their supporters.

The Nazi and Nationalist Press hurled their denunciations at the Government, causing sore hearts in the Wilhelm Strasse, Party headquarters and among Reichstag deputies of all colours. As a counter-blast the whole of the non-Nazi Press sang the praise of the renegade Strasser, who had just issued a manifesto of his intention of joining the Government as Vice-Chancellor and a list of candidates for his own new Party for the next elections. Many of the names were those of still active members of the Nazi Party, and a purge directed by Göring cleared the camp of the doubters. Göring had by now become more ruthless than ever. He, more than any other Nazi leader, saw that if the movement was to carry on, only the most stringent action would suffice. Hitler's policy in the past had rather been to let the disaffected members commit themselves red-handed in a proven attack on the movement. But Göring's method was to nip in the bud all such attempts.

With arrears of election expenses paid and a new fund of four million marks, which came to it after the Papen-Hitler dinner of reconciliation, the Nazi Party gained new vigour and the members again began to believe in

fairies. Candidates for the various State elections were put up, and a great concentration of cash and effort took place in Lippe, for as Hitler told his lieutenants, if Lippe fell before the swastika, complete power was assured.

It sounds peculiar reasoning, for Lippe is only a one-time petty principality, and surely could effect no revolutionary change in the Reich. What he meant was that the Lippe elections were to be a test of the Nazi Party's popularity; if all went well the plan evolved on the 4 January would go through.

During the elections, Hitler resumed his Harzburger Front relations with Hugenberg, accompanied by protests from Ernst Oberföhrer, Reichstag leader of the Nationalists. On the same day Hugenberg saw both von Papen and Hindenburg, repeating to the latter his fears over the *Osthilfe* scandal, remarking in passing that he was afraid that the Chancellor was not the strong man he was reputed to be, or at least, not strong enough to stand up to this "Mutiny" of the demand for publication of the Committee's finding.

As he took leave of Hindenburg, Hugenberg remarked that Herr Hitler, with whom he had resumed his hitherto friendly relations, would know how to handle such a matter—why, look how he stamped out insubordination within his own Party.

The results of the Lippe State elections proved that the Nazis were recovering ground; the poll disclosed an increase of 20 per cent, which instilled fresh spirit into the whole movement throughout the Reich, and with the defeatist section rooted out, the new slogan became: "To power without compromise." This turn in events gave a fillip to the negotiations with von Papen; Hugenberg pressed for an immediate move to put the new National front into operation, and Göring threatened "to break the neck of every follower of Strasser left in the Nazis".

. . . . .

On 18 January von Schleicher again asked Hindenburg to agree to the dissolution of the Reichstag. The President refused his "faithful comrade", but asked a favour in return. Would he please put a stop to these accursed

whisperings, which by now had almost become shouts, about the *Osthilfe* fund—his friends were being unduly embarrassed, and would he refrain from making any announcement on the matter in the Reichstag. Schleicher refused, artfully replying that if the Reichstag was dissolved the question could not be officially raised.

During the last week in January the S.A. mobilized for a tremendous demonstration march through Berlin. Whereupon the whole population had a fit of the shivers and the police called out the reserves, patrolling the districts of Wedding and Neukölln with armoured cars. The demonstration was to be held in the Bülow Platz (since renamed Horst Wessel Platz), and as the day wore on, it became evident that the Nazis had become masters of the streets—with the Communist “Iron Front”, despite all their brave noise about trouncing “the brown beasts”, looking on—impotent. Two years before, a Nazi storm trooper by the name of Horst Wessel had been killed by the Communists under circumstances reflecting no credit on himself or on his murderers, and at all the meetings held on this particular day of demonstration, 24 January, appeals to his memory and his sacrifice for the Party and for Germany became the *leitmotiv* of the symphony of hate levelled against the Communists and the “System” by the speakers throughout Berlin.

Rumours had got about that Hitler might be called to succeed Schleicher and this evoked protest from the Left Press and demonstrations from the working classes in Berlin, culminating in a mass demonstration of protest of a hundred thousand workers in the Lustgarten, against not only Hitler, but the Fascist idea.

That once famous organ of liberal opinion, the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, in a rather staid and academic leader propounded the view, which to its regular readers was heresy, that perhaps after all a Hitler Cabinet might tame the Nazis. And so the shouting and opposition began suddenly to die away.

Every available supporter to a Hitler Chancellorship was being beaten up by the agents of the new front. Schacht, addressing the Steel Syndicate, damned the Schleicher régime because of its agrarian Bolshevism and warned his

listeners that if the Government was allowed to proceed with its policy of land settlement, then the control of industry would come next in the programme. Whereupon the steel magnates, not insensible to this possibility, took out their cheque books and the new National front benefited accordingly. Schacht told the meeting, in passing, that this man Hitler "was the only man in politics to-day who could save German economy". The Association of German Industry joined in the attack and Hitler, from a waning star in December 1932, became a new, rapidly approaching comet in January 1933.

Events were just playing into his hands, ably assisted by the knowledge which had circulated like the native telegraphy of Central Africa, that the *rapprochement* between the Nazis and the Nationalists had been brought about in the house of a great banker and stock-exchange king. This lulled capital into a state of security—the capitalists thought that the anti-Jewish programme of Hitler had been dispensed with, for many said that the Baron von Schroeder was of Jewish origin.

From all points of the compass the supporters of Hitler rallied to Berlin. The Kaiserhof Hotel (the headquarters of Hitler in Berlin) became the positive pole in a politically electric State, having as its negative the Chancellery across the street. The Duke of Coburg came hurrying back from a visit to England. He visited von Hindenburg, von Papen and then Hitler. All this was causing the greatest perturbation to the Chancellor, and he called upon the Reichswehr Ministry to be prepared.

The *Reichsbanner*<sup>1</sup>, by now quite a powerful military

<sup>1</sup> At the end of 1932 the organization of the *Reichsbanner* was extremely efficient. The League of German Trade Unions had given full approval to over one million of its members to enrol as militant members of this Republican storm guard, and independent observers at the time were inclined to assess the number of its storm troops at any figure between 150,000 and 250,000 men. Realizing that the Nazis, in the event of a putsch on a grand scale, would seize the public utility undertakings, the *Reichsbanner* had organized a *Not Abteilung* (Emergency technical division) from among technical workers to counteract such a manoeuvre. Altogether, if this body had been possessed of real leadership, or rather fanatical leadership, and the *élan* of the Nazis, it would have represented a severe opposition to the progress of National Socialism. As it was, in the crucial moment, it became atrophied and failed to function.



auxiliary movement, composed in the main of old soldiers pledged to preserve the Republic, was approached by Schleicher and asked point blank if it would stand side by side with the Army and the Trade Unions if the Government declared martial law on Hitler and Hugenberg; which meant the *Sturmabteilungen* and *Stahlhelm* against the Reichswehr and *Reichsbanner*. Civil war—and planned by the military head of a Republican Government.

Karl Höltermann, the head of the *Reichsbanner*, replied to the effect that if the executive of his organization could be assured that the suggestion was meant in earnest, and that the Chancellor could guarantee that the whole Reichswehr would march even against Hindenburg and the Constitution, then most certainly.

The last few days of January were hectic ones indeed. Göring's car could be seen before the President's Palace, then before his flat in Kaiserdamm, again tearing through the Wilhelm Strasse to the Kaiserhof, and then on to the homes or offices of von Papen, Hugenberg and Schacht. Yet few in Berlin sensed what was toward.

Hindenburg became more furious than ever at Schleicher's inability to control the Reichstag's curiosity over the administration of the *Osthilfe* fund, and in a stormy interview on 28 January, between the two soldiers, the senior in military and political rank dismissed his third Chancellor in six months, and Germany was again without a Government.

The final words of Hindenburg stung von Schleicher to the quick: "If you are not man enough and strong enough to put a stop once and for all to all these bickerings about the plain duty of the State towards agriculture, I shall ask you to resign. This pretence of governing has long ceased to have any point," and the injury was magnified as he met Herrn von Papen crossing the ante-room, making for Hindenburg's study.

Back in the Ministry of War Schleicher brooded over the slights he had received, and overnight he conspired with certain general officers of the Reichswehr and with the executives of the Catholic and Socialist Trade Unions to bring about a *coup de main* on the 30 January. The Trade

Unions were to call a general strike supported by the Potsdam garrison, which would march into Berlin. A state of siege would be declared, von Papen and Hitler were to be placed under preventive arrest, the President (and incidentally the Sovereign head of the Republic's armed forces) was to be faced with the situation as he would then find it, and the conspirators would plead interest of State.

Kurt von Schleicher, the strong man, talked instead of acting at once. One of his fellow Generals had caused the plan to be telegraphed to an English newspaper and had it retransmitted to him as a Press message, copies of which were despatched post haste to the two Hindenburgs, Hitler, Göring and von Papen.

This finally decided Hindenburg to allow von Papen's suggestions to prevail, and he agreed to Hitler as Chancellor on receiving von Papen's undertaking that he would be close at hand to chaperon the Nazi chieftain. He, the Hindenburg of Tannenberg, would show this recalcitrant General that he would not be coerced by his own army.

In the meantime, however, it was necessary to allay the General's suspicions and to gain some confidence from the Nation, so the German Broadcasting Company was instructed to send out a Press message over the air that on Schleicher's resignation, Herr von Papen had been entrusted by the President (who had every confidence in him) to form a Cabinet. This sounded as if Papen was going to be Chancellor, and until a call came from Papen to the Nazi headquarters, the Nazi chiefs thought that they had been double-crossed again.

So Hitler became Chancellor. Hindenburg, who had twice refused to give him office when the Nazi Party was at the height of its power, handed him office when his fortunes were at low ebb, when his followers were in open revolt and when his financial resources were day-to-day remittances from a class alien to him, on the understanding that he toed the line.

Herr Hitler should be mightily thankful to Herrn von Papen and Herr von Hindenburg should have been more than grateful, for the tribune of the people had saved his Junkerdom from open disgrace.

On 30 January the Third Reich of Hitler was created out of Junker intrigue, the menace of both a Communist revolution and a military putsch, the fear of scandal over a few squandered millions, the pertinacity of the National Socialist leaders, and the guiding hand of a Catholic nobleman.

Immediately after the world learned of Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of the German Reich, the Constitution of his Cabinet was announced: Franz von Papen, *Vice-Chancellor*; Alfred Hugenberg, *Minister of Economics*; Franz Seldte (leader of the *Stahlhelm*), *Minister of Labour*; General Baron Werner von Blomberg, *Minister of Defence*; Count Lutz von Schwerin-Krosigk, *Minister of Finance*; Franz Gürtner, *Minister of Justice*; Baron von Eltz-Rübenach, *Minister of Posts and Transport*; Günther Gerecke (Hindenburg's election campaign manager), *Minister for Employment*; Baron Konstantin von Neurath, *Foreign Secretary*; Dr. Wilhelm Frick, *Minister of the Interior*; and Captain Hermann Göring, *Minister without Portfolio*.

Frick and Göring were the only two Nazis in the Cabinet; the rest were all thorough-going Junkers, many of whom had held office in Papen's and Schleicher's Cabinets, while all were friends of Hindenburg and Papen, and most were members of the *Herrenklub*.

As a *sine qua non* of taking office, Adolf Hitler demanded that the Reichstag should be dissolved and new elections held to show the world that Germany was behind his Government. To this Hindenburg agreed, having first adjured the Cabinet to "go forward with God" in their deliberations.

This demand for a ratification of the President's act in calling him to power, was the most astute move that Hitler has ever made, for his position as Chancellor gave him the finance and machinery of the State, such as broadcasting and police, with which to fight the elections, for Party had become State. Papen, although he was not yet to know it, was already outmanœuvred.

This new Government of National concentration was at first not looked upon as truly National Socialist. The

world said that the old Prussianism was back in the saddle. The world was both right and wrong. Prussianism was in the saddle, but not the kind exemplified by the array of Junkers in the Cabinet. A neo-Conservative Prussianism, until now known as National Socialism, had seized control in Germany and there were very few in 1933 who realized it.

Now we can see the hoof of Prussia, which in the past was great, resting on the soil of Austria, Bohemia, Memel, Slovakia and Poland. Under the guise of a new Socialism, the kindly German people were to be incited to the support of a new aggressive Nationalism, in whose maw they risk being themselves destroyed.

Hindenburg was happy, because von Papen repeatedly assured him that he had Hitler tied hand and foot. Papen was well satisfied because he thought that he had used Hitler to build his Holy Roman Empire of the Western Germans, while the Nazi rank and file went mad with joy to think that the day so long promised and awaited, had arrived. Power was in their hands and they drank of it to the full.

Hitler's appointment, in the light of all the contradictory statements issued by the Government and the President's bureau, during January, came as a surprise to the German people and possibly as a greater surprise to the ordinary membership of the National Socialist movement, which looked with trepidation at the overwhelming number of Nationalist office-bearers in Hitler's first Cabinet. At first blush it looked as if he had become ensnared in the very conditions against which he had protested for twelve months—himself a prisoner of his Junker and industrialist ministers. There was von Papen as Vice-Chancellor, with the ear of the President; Hugenberg, with his newspapers and cinemas to make or break the Nazis; von Blomberg, pro-Nazi, it was true, but a Junker nevertheless; Franz Seldte, the leader of the *Stahlhelm*, together with several Ministers left over from the Schleicher régime.

The non-Nazi portion of the German Republic, reviewing the constitution of the Hitler Cabinet, breathed freely, and the Socialist and Jewish Press in a weak moment let

loose a spate of satire on the new master, thereby thinking that his discomfiture would please and assist the Nationalists. Not so. Paper after paper was suppressed or banned indefinitely.

The Nazi population filled the streets, and by their very solid brown mass brought fear to the minds of the average man.

For many years now the German citizen had become accustomed to the cry: "Germany awake! Judah perish!" He had read in his newspapers that Hitler had told the Supreme Court at Leipzig: "There will come a time when our ideas can no longer be kept from the world. Out of forty million Germans of voting age, thirty-five millions will be behind us, and they will know what they want and what we can give them. After our victory . . . heads will roll." The citizen remembered also, that Hermann Göring had promised that "Jews will hang as soon as we are in power".

It was all very bewildering and many wondered if these catch-phrases were merely political metaphor or a prediction of actual facts. Rumours ran like wildfire that a St. Bartholomew's eve for German Jewry was being considered. For years a tirade of hate had swept the country. "Every National Socialist is an anti-Semite, but not every anti-Semite is a National Socialist," ran one slogan, while another said that "Anti-Semitism is to a certain extent the sentimental foundation of our movement". With this intense propaganda, the average Nazi was naturally to expect that the 600,000 Jews in Germany were to be exterminated. Much loose talk among the rank and file in the movement led foreign observers, particularly, to believe that much of what the Party literature boasted would be fulfilled. The Nazis came to power, but the bloody pogrom did not become the order of the day. Instead, an order issued from the Brown House: "There are to be no individual pogroms. We will kill the Jew systematically—where he can feel it most—in his economic life."

Disappointed that the "internal enemy" of Germany's economy was not to be handed over for popular punishment, the S.A. men, accustomed to an iron discipline,

reluctantly obeyed the new order, but the more rowdy elements in the Party, drunk with the arrival of "their" revolution, broke over the traces and looted Jewish shops, manhandling Jewish persons. The ire of the brown-shirts if anything, was directed more towards the Communists than against the Jews, and for a few days the streets of the big cities experienced more blood-shed than ever before.

Overnight staunch Republicans joined the Nazi Party, more out of fear than from conversion, and where hitherto the German workman was wont to cry: "Red Front," he now took great pleasure in being the loudest with his "Heil Hitler". Such is human clay and the fickle electorate.

Many of the incidents and much of the disorder occurring in Germany during the early days of the Nazi revolution were thought to be the natural concomitants of a temporary transitional period, but the weeks reached into months with no abatement of the terror and the world concluded that the acts were those of the new order. Hysteria swayed the masses and behind the cloak of a National Revolution many satisfied personal feuds of long standing. Some petty Nazi official had suffered at the hands of a Jewish or even an Aryan landlord, or had lost a lawsuit to another and, nursing his imaginary grievance, he had allowed his slumbering personal hate to burst into flame, wreaking his will upon the poor unfortunate behind the cover of the brown shirt. Not only Jews received treatment of this sort. The method found itself useful in dealing with Aryan rivals also.

Confused by all the conflicting reports coming out of Germany, the world looked on and wondered if this great Nation would survive or if it would destroy itself completely. It doubted the ability of Hitler and his Ministers, many unskilled in the management of a great political machine, to achieve the unity promised by the President in his speech after his appointment of Hitler. The world also knew—what was known to Hitler and his two fellow Nazis in the Cabinet—that the Nationalists would prove difficult bedmates.

What the world did not know, however, was that for twenty-four hours the Hitler administration had sat over a

veritable store of gunpowder. The recalcitrant Schleicher and his Potsdam Garrison, aided by the *Reichsbanner* and Trade Unions, had for a brief spell continued as a factor in German affairs, for the *coup* had not been completely abandoned. The flooding of Berlin with hordes of S.A. men and *Stahlhelm*, the dissolution of the Reichstag and the declaration by Hindenburg that he invoked Article 48 of the Constitution in favour of Göring as Reichs Commissioner for Prussia (for, by arrangement, von Papen had vacated this office, which he had retained even during Schleicher's Chancellorship) came as a wet shower to damp the ardours of the counter-revolutionaries, who, in face of events, could not pursue their original intentions.

Göring was dictator of Prussia, with a 100,000 trained police behind him. These police were as good as soldiers and were as to 80 per cent Nazi in sympathy. The strong-arm method had won again. This declaration of a state of emergency caused a flutter in the Southern German States, who feared another attack upon their autonomy. Bavaria, more particularly, talked loosely again of the Wittelsbach dynasty and monarchical movements stirred from their slumbers.

The Catholic Trade Unions in Prussia refused to accept the situation presented by the Hitler Government and in conjunction with the General Trades Councils, called a general strike. But not a man came out. This technical opposition from the Catholic Unions and the murmurings from the Catholic South German States, reminded Hitler that he had a Catholic as Vice-Chancellor and from practically the first day of the régime Franz von Papen became the drummer to attract the Catholic factions to a support of the new Reich. In every part of the Reich von Papen was to be heard exhorting the faithful to blind obedience to Adolf Hitler. His speeches, well turned and beautifully delivered, but not too audible without a microphone, sounded more convincing, if that was possible, than the harangues of Hitler, Göring and Goebbels.

Franz von Papen, aristocrat, had mastered the jargon of the tribune of the people—in fact he improved upon it

by adding the aristocratic idea to the claims of the Nazis. There was no such thing as accident of birth; he tried to explain. In Germany there must arise a new aristocracy and it would be the best of the National Socialists—brain, spirit, achievement and the will to fight for the existence of the fatherland. While preaching National Socialism, he prepared the way for his own crusade, or so he thought.

Hitler announced his intention of proscribing the Communist Party and von Papen vigorously protested. In this he was over-ruled by his Nationalist colleagues, for had he not told them that Communism was a menace and pointed to Hitler as the only possible saviour? Papen wanted to keep such movements as the Communist Party in existence, because at election times their votes would prevent the Nazis from securing too great a majority. Poor Papen, he was not to know that there would be no more Parties to participate in elections.

The Nazis had different plans, as shown in something Hitler said in a speech in the Berlin *Sportpalast* on 10 February 1932: “. . . in us alone lies the future of Germany. If the German people should desert us, that will not restrain us. We will take the course that is necessary to save Germany from ruin.”

Papen, Hugenberg and Seldte became nervous. Decree after decree came from the President's hand, to be used by Hitler as weapons to prevent any opposition to his Party during the elections, the campaign for which had just commenced. Communist and Socialist leaders were being hunted down and hauled off to concentration camps; newspapers, organizations and meetings were being suppressed. The ruthlessness of Göring's police caused outcries throughout the world, and after each protest the brutality was intensified, but with millions of Nazis in the country the cry of the minority passed unnoticed.

With the dissolution of the Reichstag, not only the deputies, but the whole German race seemed to have gone on holiday. There began the era of flags and festivals. For ever marching, singing, shouting, drinking, and acclaiming this new Germany, the people became intoxicated with the greatness of themselves. Each city and village



remained *en fête* for weeks, buntings blowing in the breeze; the swastika ubiquitously predominating. The very voluptuousness of the people's joy became embarrassing. Over night the whole of Germany appeared to have turned to Hitler as its God. The opposition went to ground and has remained there ever since, only to break out in occasional pamphleteering campaigns and ghostly radio prowls, crying: "*Freiheit*."

If the German people wanted freedom in 1933, then those so-called intellectuals, strong men of the Trade Unions and avowed disciples of Bebel, the great Social Democrat, who were representatives of the German Nation, cowardly betrayed them. In their hands was the weapon, the most powerful weapon in modern history, the child of Socialism itself—the general strike. They did not use it, because, as one prominent Social Democrat deputy told me, "Through the President, Hitler had received power quite legally and had acted, by virtue of the decree placed in his hands, in a legal fashion. If Hitler broke the Constitution later in his administration, then measures would have to be taken." What these measures were he did not say and I had no opportunity to find out. But it all seemed to be like a conversation out of *Alice in Wonderland*. Talking quite bluntly, these people whom the Nazis had intrigued against and pushed out of office, knew that they had shot their bolt and they made way for the new master. The responsibility of governing a great Nation had proved too much for their limited capability; they had used up all their patent quackeries on the credulous masses and had no further remedies. The Nazis said they had a good, new, unfailing cure, and because the masses had not bought from their stall before, they tried the prescription, the after-effect of which on the German people time alone will show, for fifty years is but a page in the history book.

Events were now leading on to election day, which was fixed for the 5 March. Trouble was everywhere. The Nazis did not assume control of the Reich quite so easily as has been commonly supposed. The State Governments were by no means tractable, and the Left Parties were not completely dead. They held their meetings under difficult

conditions, it is true, but their voices were heard. Whereupon, giving measure for measure, Göring's decree obtained from Hindenburg to rule alone in Prussia, was extended to prohibit all meetings of the Left. His police had strict orders to enforce this. Official after official was removed from office, and the whole administration of Prussia became filled with stalwarts of the National Socialist movement who could be really trusted. In truth Germany was experiencing her Cromwellian era.

Von Papen, Vice-Chancellor of the Reich, looked on spellbound. Why had he not used these measures in Prussia, he pondered. Attacks on the Catholic Trade Union and Catholic organizations brought no public protest from him, even when asked about his attitude to the situation created, by his old friends the two Hindenburgs, who were bewildered by the spate of decrees the President was asked to sign.

A month of the alliance between the Nazis and the Nationalists proved enough for both sides. Von Papen, Hugenberg and Seldte formed a black-white-red fighting front from among their followers too ensure safety of their election meetings. Meeting after meeting was broken up by uniformed S.A. men, and Göring looked on without lifting a finger. If these people chose to demonstrate in their own way, in opposition to his decree, so much the worse for them. His police were not for their protection when they were busy attempting to undermine the Nazi movement. The increasing opposition of the new Prussian régime was sharply felt. Hard knocks were given and taken.

Von Papen protested, taking the lead from foreign opinion, because if he was to ride the storm, the good opinion of the foreigner had to be retained. In a speech at Dortmund Göring replied to both Papen and the foreign Press: "In the future there will be only one man who will wield power and bear responsibility in Prussia—that is myself. Whoever does his duty in the services of the State, who obeys my orders and ruthlessly makes use of his revolver when attacked, is assured of my protection. Whoever, on the other hand, plays the coward will have to reckon on being thrown out by me at the earliest possible moment.

A bullet fired from the barrel of a police pistol is my bullet. If you say that is murder, then I am the murderer." And he wound up: "People are prattling about two sorts of law, aye, I know two sorts of law, because I know two sorts of men; those who are with us and those who are against us."

Life in Germany had indeed changed. Complete disregard for institutions, persons and constitutions, accompanied by brutality without precedent, became the policy of the Hitler régime. All legal guarantees were abolished and arbitrary acts, such as searches, arrests, confiscation of property and lodgement in gaol, removed all opposition. The Liberal-minded and the religious orders who uttered feeble protests, were looked upon as " Reds " and treated accordingly. Because of this, millions kept silent. Through all these bloody weeks von Papen continued his electioneering and came out in strong terms in support of the Nazis. If need be, he was quite content to wade through blood to achieve his end, for had he not done so in America? The lives of a few thousand people were nothing compared with the great future of his Germany. Von Papen is the super-patriot, the dæmon—the urge to assist in securing German greatness at any price has dominated his life and the dastardly nature of the means employed has never daunted him. He is the perfect Jesuit of the Inquisition, living four hundred years too late.

On 21 February he addressed an election meeting in Berlin. His audience was composed entirely of university and high-school students and his ultra-Nationalism out-Hitlered Hitler: " I wish that the appeal of the black-white-red fighting front would find an echo in your hearts, just as once the words of Fichte to the German students did, when under these windows rang the drums of French battalions. The new Germany needs you and your whole undivided faith for the German future. The faith in the *sacrum imperium*, for which two millions died (*the hypocrisy of von Papen here becomes apparent—to him the Great War had become a holy war: Author*) and to whom we living are indebted and for whose memory we must stand up with all our strength."

From time to time in his speeches, von Papen attacked the parties with which he had previously collaborated and though silent during the days of the attacks upon him in June of the previous year, he now found courage to thrash them unmercifully and to declare that the new order of a romantic Conservatism, tempered with his holy idea, would destroy them and thus build Germany anew.

On 22 February in a broadcast over all German radio stations he appealed to the Catholics to desert from the Centre and to support the Government—as he said, a truly Christian Conservative Government. Many remembered his warning to the Centre Party in his Dülmen speech and saw the changing times as the last movement in the symphony of destruction. Others like sheep followed him.

“I do not want to allow myself to be drawn into a polemic argument with the Parties, which to-day feel themselves excluded and attacked. Here I warn you that at last we have to find a way out of the conception of the Weimar times. I would, however, like to dwell for a moment upon the Centre, the Party in whose ranks I fought for twelve years to secure the victory of the Conservative idea. Since the 1 June the Press of this Party has attacked me with nameless bitterness, and until to-day I was silent. For as long as I was Chancellor of an authoritarian Government, which stood above Parties, my position forbade the stooping down to the level of election fights.

“When now, I have broken with this rule, I do so because I bear a high measure of responsibility for the union of the German Reich, and because I see in it my first duty to prop up the Conservative part of the three army pillars which are to-day the bearings of the National uprising. Already Brüning and Kaas have for years accentuated that for the recuperation of our internal system, the existence of a great Christian Conservative movement is a necessity. When to-day we have started to break down the narrowness of the D.N.V.P. (German National People's Party) and to make out of it, for the time being, in the fighting *bloc* of black-white-red, an all-embracing great Conservative movement, then the Centre should be glad about this. In the short days before the

elections organic decisions were not possible—they are left over to the future.

“One thing is sure: a great Christian Conservative movement which wishes for the renewal of our people in all its branches, must see a large part of German Catholicism enclosed in its ranks. The two Christian confessions must carry on united, as once before on the battle-field, the work of reconstruction. I say it loud and distinctly—I have not opted for a Party when I stand here to-day—I fight in the front line of the spiritual revolution in which we stand—I fight with all of you against collectivism and the mechanizing of this life and for the religious and social renewal of the life of our German people.

“Why does the Centre fight against us to-day with the weapon of lies? Why does it seek to make the Catholic people believe that its Holy Church is in danger? The opposite is the case . . . are we not it, we who seek to restore the position of the family as the ancient cell of the Nation, the honour and dignity of the German wife and mother? Certainly, the Centre too has fought for all these ethical values, again and again. But it chiefly fought on the wrong front.

“Out of a Party, which had the deep belief in the power of the Almighty, which fought in the *Kulturkampf* for the highest moral values—and since Erzberger’s time—has grown a Party of political opportunism, in which material earthly matters have long since overgrown the spiritual ideals. How else could it be explained that a few days ago even purely religious associations set their names to a political Party appeal—among others the Catholic Mother’s Association. Has the faith in the purely religious become so weak that an appeal along these rational lines of Party Politics has become necessary to prop it up? I know that this is not so—that these associations are only pushed forward by Party bureaucracy, for the sake of votes.

“My friends in Westphalia and especially my Catholic farmers in the Münsterland (around the von Papen family seat), with whom I feel so tightly bound up; they know that I would never give my name and position in order

to help a political movement threaten danger to our most holy possession. Just because I know that the moral revival of our Nation can only be achieved when the Catholic part of the Nation, which clings so much to its Church and which lives with Her, has its part in it. Therefore I appeal to it, so that German Catholicism shall become a part of the front of National uprising in this hour."

With words like these from a leader of the Catholic laity and a personal official of the Vatican, the German Catholics saw no danger. Wherever Catholicism had its home, there Papen would be found preaching the spiritual crusade of the Nazi Government. In Catholic Bavaria, which was still smarting under his July threat of arbitrariness, and showing its present open opposition to the Nazi régime, his convincing appeals moved the masses to support the new Chancellor, either by voting direct for the Nazi candidate, or by supporting a candidate of the Nationalist front. Could the devout Bavarian help himself when cajoled with words like these? "There is nothing more awkward than to make an examination as to who is National and who is not. . . . I can, therefore, not think of a rebuilding of the Reich going on, without all the Conservative powers of German Catholicism, with which I feel particularly closely connected, taking their proper part in it, and to appreciate their value and achievements in German history and German restoration.

"To-day the position is such, and it has been like this for years, that all the energy of leading statesmen is eaten up by the task of maintaining themselves in power. This is not a specific appearance in German lands, but elsewhere, too, the using up of Cabinets is increasing in grotesque measure. Before a leader has the chance to develop statesmanlike qualities; and to work soberly, he is thrown over again. But the most terrible thing of all is that he is thrown over by forces who, apart from this, do not know any other art.

"To be a statesman means, first of all, responsibility to God, to history and to one's own conscience.

"For half a year a certain section of the Press has been reporting alleged attacks I have apparently made against

the Bavarian State, and what it has to fear from me. I now put the question clearly—what are the ill-treated rights of Bavaria that I have neglected to look after? What has Bavaria suffered from me? In the imagination of a certain Party, everything. In reality, nothing. I have not lessened the ability of existence of any German land nor have I threatened to do so, but I have removed the Government of Prussia, with the agreement of the President and two Reichs Cabinets. To Prussia itself, nothing has happened, unless it is that it has been freed from a Government which complied neither with the altered opinion of the Nation, nor with the demands of a turn in the policy of the Reich.

“ Perhaps it is argued that there is a difference between Prussia and Bavaria, in their respective conditions. The deciding difference is that the Prussian Government is parted from that of the Reich by only the width of a street, while the Government of Bavaria is, after all, 730 kilometres away. The progressive thought was not harmed, but the supposition for the real ‘idea of advancement’ was created by the removal of the unhappy dualism between Prussia and the Reich.

“ From Munich you are trying to erect land frontiers against the Reich and that on the dangerous status of Weimar. Dangerous, because the Weimar Constitution, which lays such great emphasis on a unitarian Reichstag, is simply unable to cope with the principle of any future expansion and progressive ideas. Everything that Bavaria has lost in her own right, has been lost through this unitarian Reichstag, foremost among which being the loss of its independence in finance. This step came from the all-powerful Erzberger at Weimar (Erzberger was in 1918 the head of the Centre Party. It will be remembered that he was one of those Germans who arranged the armistice with the Allied Generals and was later party to the negotiations for the Peace Treaty). At that time, Bavaria drew not parliamentary, but internal political consequences from the new State, and ran against the spirit of Weimar. Bavaria became the land of protest against the Weimar Republic; it was called by the Right ‘order cell’ while

it was known as the 'collection of reaction' by the Left.

"To-day we have come to a point when certain Left pacifist papers, who at that time could not do enough to lower the opinion of the Bavarian in the eyes of the Reich, have fled to Munich. Now all at once Berlin has become the place of reaction and Bavaria is the island of freedom.

"Yet all we Germans thank the Bavarian people for giving a home to National and Conservative thought in those terrible post-war years. How can a foreigner take seriously the complaints of Bavaria against the Reich Government? First, as a matter of course, he must enquire what has happened to Bavaria; and everyone must reply—nothing. He will also argue, against the fears of Bavaria, that the Chancellor is a son of the Bajuwar Inn<sup>1</sup> countryside, that for twenty years he not only enjoyed the rights of a citizen of Munich, but that his movement developed under the very eyes of the Bavarian Government. He will also know that the Reichs Minister of the Interior comes from the Bavarian Civil Service and that Reichs Minister Göring comes from the Bavarian Army, that the Minister of Justice was a scholar of the *Maximilianeum* and had for ten years the trust of the Bavarian Cabinet.

"I ask you what have they all done, since they have become statesmen, to lose this trust? These are things which cannot be understood and they strike me as comical. Did Prussia grow furious during the war, when the Bavarian Prime Minister, Count Hertling, was made Reichs Chancellor and Prime Minister of Prussia by the King of Prussia?

"I confess myself to be a Conservative Catholic and a German Federalist and I will be true to this conviction as long as I breathe. But I do not confess the rotten things that ought to fall. I confess to the belief in the renewal of the Conservative German spirit. I say fervently, yes! to the rise of the Nation in which we stand. I see its shortcomings, its passions and all its faults, but as a progressive

<sup>1</sup> Reference to Hitler having been born on the River Inn. Bajuwar is applied to all those who come from that part of the country stretching across into Hungary. As one would say West Country or Middle West in England or America. The German spelling of Bavaria is Bayern and this and Bajuwar have a common root.



statesman I have to give all my strength to get the best out of this movement.

"I am against a suppression of free opinion in Germany, but stand for the suppression of all things that are malicious. When political debate has returned once more to a plane on which it is worthy of a Nation of culture, I will joyfully stand up again in open debate. . . ."

Neither the Bavarians nor the Reichs Catholics could resist his arguments, for they thought that a return to sanity (which he appeared to promise them) in German politics was all to the good, while those who heard him speak a little later, in Stuttgart on 3 March, voted for him and for Hitler. ". . . As much as I am above the suspicion of being a cosmopolitan, I have a right to call for a fight against the unhappy leaning in our people to cosmopolitanism, as strongly as I call for world recognition of our Nation and the European mission of the Reich."

Von Papen's speeches on behalf of the Hitler Government stirred the worst and the best that existed in German Nationalism. Many true Nationalists saw a new Germany rising to continue the work of the thinkers, scientists, poets and musicians of the past, engaged also in an honourable interchange of commerce and culture with other Nations, while others saw only the vainglory which would come out of the pursuit of a policy of truculent Nationalism and aggression, a policy which aimed at relying on a fictitious history to justify the stealing of other people's lands and goods and a repudiation of all normal conduct—to reach a hollow greatness.

On 4 March, the eve of the poll, concentrations of S.A., S.S. and Stahlhelm had been made in and around Berlin. March and countermarch of solid masses of brown, black and field grey awed the people. They saw the might of the Third Reich, and the day was also chosen as the "Day of the National Awakening". It was the day for the final speeches to the electorate, and Göring, speaking from Frankfort-on-Main, declared: "My measures are not to be vitiated by legal considerations. You must all become accustomed to the idea that I am not in office to dispense justice, but to destroy and exterminate." And so, with

these words singing in his ears, the German citizen went to the polling booth. Those who intended to vote for the Nazis and Nationalists were safe; those Communists and Socialists who hoped to use the political expedient of the vote, hoping against hope that they could turn the brown-shirts out after having let them in, were in danger of destruction.

While Göring and other Nazis preached the gospel of force and extermination, von Papen continued his assault on the Catholic bastions with honeyed words: "The goal of the German revolution must not become a Democratic Cæsarism, for then Oswald Spengler, who prophesied this development in his *Decline of the West*, would be right. . . . When I spoke here in Munich last October about the idea of the *sacrum imperium*, I was pointed at with a pitying smile as a romantic. We Catholics know best that cultural fights and parliamentary and coalition types of thinking are only short periods in our thousand-year-old history, but that the idea of the mission of the Reich has grown up in us that thousand years of forming. You German Fellows (the Fellows of the German Catholic Association he was addressing) can be proud to stand on the threshold of a new time and to belong to the awakers of this Reich idea. In the lands beyond the frontiers of this Reich, through your organization, you can be the disciples of this idea, of which the poet sings:—

We will not break our oath,  
Nor turn to knaves at will,  
We will preach and speak  
Of the Holy German Reich."

The results of the elections were announced, and beacon blazed to beacon across the hilltops of Germany. The streets resounded to the tramp of marching men and the wild cries of the people. It was as if some great battle had been won or some great peace signed. Everyone was out in the street, and, despite the jubilation shown by the Nazi partisans, heads still continued to be broken. The Nazis had won and, with the addition of the National

vote, if one still cares to consider that the Harzburger Front remained intact, won handsomely.

National Socialists	17,300,000
Nationalists	3,100,000
Communists	4,900,000
Social Democrats	7,200,000

The Nazi figures show quite clearly that many more millions had given them their votes and that the Nationalist vote was lower than it had ever been. Only one possible construction can be placed on this—the German Catholic electorate totalled something like twelve millions in the Reich—therefore many must have given their votes to National Socialists, seeing such an illustrious member of their faith in the Hitler Cabinet.

National Socialism, battered and torn in January, by the “legality” of electoral methods, could say that it was in power by the will of the people and since as from this election no other Party has existed in the Reich, it claims so still.

The Hitler-Papen-Hugenberg-Seldte coalition had 340 seats in the Reichstag out of a total of 647—a clear majority. The Government proceeded to consolidate its position by decree, commissioners were appointed in every State, and the swastika banner of the Nazis became, by Presidential decree, flying side by side with the old Imperial colours, the standard of the Third Reich, connecting, as the decree said, “the glorious past with the vigorous rebirth of the German Nation.”

It was ordained that the new Reichstag should meet in the Garrison Church at Potsdam on 21 March; indeed a psychological gesture to the world that the new Germany had arisen. The pomp of almost forgotten military splendour (and the shade of Frederick the Great) was to present a background to the new Government of National Concentration.

In the meantime, very hasty measures were put into operation finally to quell all opposition. The *Reichsbanner* headquarters at Magdeburg were smashed up, and whole-

sale arrests made. Those who, in any manner whatever, were suspected of being against the Government were closely watched or haled off to concentration camps. Others were intimidated into silence, if not acquiescence, until by the time the Potsdam day came, there appeared to be complete unanimity among the people.

The attitude towards the Jew took on a serious turn and many complaints came pouring into Government offices from Germans and from influential circles abroad, in which mild remonstrance mingled with bitter recrimination.

The Nazis relied upon the Nationalist deputies to give them the majority in the Reichstag and von Papen breathed freely, for he saw that he had as yet the whip hand, but his calculations were rapidly upset. The Communist deputies, totalling eighty-one, were excluded from the Reichstag and arrested—thus giving the Hitler group a clear majority without need for recourse to Papen-Nationalist favours.

With the Left section of the storm troopers led by Roehm, conspiring to stage a Putsch, supported by the Schleicher faction in the Reichswehr, both von Papen and Hitler had to stand together—Hitler out of fear of his own would-be rebels and von Papen nervous that Schleicher might demand payment for the lies and betrayal of the last six months.

With these things simmering, the Government and the Reichstag deputies went to Potsdam, but it is significant that the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor made two different pilgrimages before appearing to assist in the dedication ceremony of the Third Reich. Adolf Hitler went to the Luisenstaedtsche Cemetery in Berlin to visit the graves of storm troopers killed in riots of the past, while Franz von Papen attended Divine Service at the Catholic Pfarrkirche, both later uniting with the Reichstag deputies to go to the Potsdam Garrison Church.

In the presence of the assembled Reichstag deputies, diplomats, foreign Press, and prominent Germans, the Hitler Cabinet received the public approval of Paul von Hindenburg, who read aloud the authorization law or Enabling Act, which conferred upon the Chancellor the power to rule unchallenged for four years.

Everybody who had conspired to trap Hitler found themselves defeated, for Hindenburg, by his own act, was turned out of the seat of Bismarck—he had handed his power on to Hitler. The Palace clique had been destroyed and by its favourite. From this time the Nazi movement could only be ejected from power by force—mere conspiracy would prove useless, because the power of dismissal had gone from Hindenburg.

In that old church of Frederick the Great, the twentieth-century Wotan handed over the reins of the Reich to the representative of an order of which he had but the vaguest notion. The wreath he laid that day on the tomb of the soldier-king was considered by many at the time as being a wreath on the grave of Prussian Junkerdom. The Nazis believed that the shadow of the Hohenzollern had disappeared with the installation of their leader as Chancellor. The Leftist section hailed the arrival at last, of the long awaited *Volksgemeinschaft* (Union of the people), and swore to the destruction of tradition and birthright. But the real leaders of the new Germany thought otherwise, as their speeches and actions prove. The great historic past was conjured up to lend spirit to the new awakening. The greatness of the past was waved before the eyes of seventy million people, to encourage and sustain their support for a mighty strengthening of the armed forces, and for an expansion into all the German-speaking countries.

Hindenburg reminded the gathering that the election results of the 5 March proved conclusively that the Nation had placed itself solidly behind the Chancellor of his choice, thus giving him constitutional foundation for his work. He called to the Nation to stand behind the Government and to do everything possible to further its work. The very spot on which they stood, he reminded the assembly, brought to mind a retrospective view of the old Prussia, the spirit of which should inspire the present generation.

An appropriate speech in a fit setting. The desired effect had been achieved and the minds of all Germans turned to a contemplation of their country's greatness. From then onwards even the neutral elements in the great German

population turned to support the new régime, for it promised much. But the Left of the National Socialists pursued its own course, ineffectually and ultimately, to its own destruction. Academic Socialism had disappeared in Germany or would sleep for at least a decade, according to how the Third Reich prospered under Hitler.

On 24 March the Enabling Act was ratified by the Reichstag, even the remnants of the Centre Party which had sworn to oppose it, voting for it. Only the Social Democrats voted against it, the voting being 441 to 94. This placed supreme power in the hands of the Hitler Cabinet to govern the Reich for four years, unfettered by reference to Parliament. Unrestricted rights to promulgate laws of the most drastic type, even to effectuating a change in the Constitution, was granted in this Act. The right of veto of the Reichsrat was dispensed with, and Hitler had more power than ever. The Reichstag, Reichsrat and the Weimar Constitution no longer existed, and the Cabinet proceeded to rule with a rubber stamp. This last meeting of a duly elected Reichstag, in which all Parties were represented, sealed the doom of Democratic Germany and heralded the entrance of the Third Empire.

At this meeting, once the Act was passed, the immunity of a deputy from arrest within the Reichstag disappeared and, there and then, a member of the Cabinet and a personal friend of Hindenburg, Günther Gereke, was arrested on the order of Göring on a charge of embezzlement of State funds. Throughout the country wholesale arrests of a similar nature took place.

Attacks upon the Jews increased and world opinion found expression in the Press of every country. Far from bringing an abatement of the anti-Jewish feeling in Germany, these Press attacks intensified the hatred against the Jew, ultimately culminating in the official boycott of 1 April.

The Catholic Church began to complain of interference with religious doctrines and within a day or two the Lutheran or Protestant Church added its weight, by issuing a manifesto, stating that it was prepared to defend its rights. Franz von Papen, as Papal Chamberlain rather than as

Vice-Chancellor, stepped into the breach. He declared that the Third Reich stood for positive Christianity as far as the Evangelical and Catholic Churches were concerned and it would pursue a Conservative policy. This declaration temporarily pacified the Bishops' Conference, which forthwith issued another manifesto recanting its earlier denunciation of the Hitler régime.

Organized religion, like organized Socialism in Germany, had lost its fight. The Church of Luther had become spineless, and it was left for a few rebels like Niemöller to defy the Government in isolated districts.

The divorce between Hugenberg's Nationalists and the Nazis was soon about to be made absolute. Continually, Hugenberg would run crying to this influential German and to that General, that he was afraid of the all-consuming appetite of the Nazi machine. He grumbled that the anti-Jewish tactics would be bad for business, meaning, of course, his business, which consisted of exporting his films and receiving advertisements from abroad through his advertising agencies for insertion in his newspapers. The Nationalist Party in the Reichstag began to frown upon the Nazis and its leader. Ernst Oberfohren, the Nationalist leader in the House, resigned because of "the disastrous and suicidal policy" of his Party and of Hugenberg in particular, for allowing the National Socialist Party to run away with it. He paid for his opinion a few weeks later with his life, murdered under suspicious circumstances. This was von Papen's first casualty in the Third Reich. The way of an Iscariot is bloody.

To make matters worse for the international prestige of the Government, revolts broke out in the *Stahlhelm*, which until now, through its chief, Franz Seldte, had given loyal support to the new régime. Its members of proved military service, were constantly in conflict with younger men of the S.A. Many striplings of reasonably high rank in the S.A., from time to time, found themselves placed in positions of authority over the ranks of the old soldiers and they exercised that authority in an extremely objectionable manner. Words came to blows, and squads of *Stahlhelm* offered physical resistance to groups of S.A. At Brunswick

the movement was prohibited because, in the place of the Nazi salute of the upraised arm, many Stahlhelm members had raised a clenched fist in the Communist salute. Amid all these alarums and excursions into realms of make-believe and comic opera the Government was steadfastly entrenching itself to a degree undreamed of. Ordinance followed ordinance, and Hindenburg's time was fully occupied in signing the many hundreds of mandates or blank cheques which the Nazi Cabinet placed before him.

. . . . .

On the last day of March the Government announced the law for the co-ordination and assimilation (*Gleichschaltung*) of the States and Provinces. From now on everything in politics was spoken of as being *gleichgeschaltet* (co-ordinated) by the Reich. This new law gave to every State a similar control and administration as existed in Prussia; but its autonomy was destroyed. Although the various States retained the normal parliamentary form of Government, such assemblies ceased to function in any way other than to put into execution orders issued by the Reichs Government. No local administration could be reprovod by a vote of the Diet, and a change of local Government could only be brought about by the will of the Reichs Government.

On the same day the Cabinet discussed its official attitude to the Jewish problem, the popular clamour of the storm troopers demanding the head of the Jew on a charger making it necessary to devise some plan to satisfy them. Hitler, now in office, was inclined to move more slowly towards the elimination of the Jew from German National life; he had also to move cautiously because of his industrial backers and Cabinet colleagues, Von Papen and Hugenberg were against any kind of action, but Göring and Goebbels were all for smashing the Jew completely.

Finally, the Cabinet agreed that direct action against the Jew should not be undertaken by the Government at all, but that the problem should be handled by a specially constituted committee directed by Julius Streicher and



that the S.A. should execute the orders of this "Organization Committee".

The Press received a proclamation calling upon the Nation to boycott the Jews, and by the morning of 1 April 1933, in Berlin alone, 30,000 storm troopers were on duty picketing all Jewish shops and offices in the Capital. The whole Reich was reminded of the fact that the Jews were behind Communism and that international Socialism had been fathered by Marx—himself a Jew. Hitler had said: "If the Jew wins over the world with the help of Marxian doctrines, then their crown will be the wreath of death for mankind. So I believe in the spirit of the Almighty Creator—I shall defend myself against the Jew, I shall fight for the work of the Lord!" So, with this as a light to guide them, the Nazi platoons marched through the streets, bearing banners calling upon all Germans to avenge themselves on Israel. Lorries rolled through the streets loaded with shouting brown-shirts waving anti-Jewish placards. Overnight yellow badges had been pasted on Jewish windows and on the doors of Jewish professional men. All bore the same legend: "Germans beware! Do not buy from Jews."

In the shadow of the approaching doom, men tend to deny its reality. With the arrival of Hitler's National Socialism, both German and Foreign opinion held the view that the attack upon the Jew, promised in fifteen years of speeches by Hitler and Göring, would not transpire; but the immemorial cry of the German went up to heaven: "*Es tut nichts, der Jude wird verbrannt*" (it matters not, the Jew must be burned), and the race seemingly chosen by destiny to follow the path of Ishmael, felt the wrath of Germany's pent-up hatred and years of disgrace and economic distress. The boycott was on. Instead of the medieval method of firing the Ghetto the bank account was being frozen.

Hindenburg and von Papen had many Jewish friends and so did many members of Hitler's Cabinet. But not a word came from any of them in public protest. Already the Cabinet was beginning to see that it had no influence in the conduct of affairs in the Reich; with Göring as

dictator of Prussia and the *Gleichschaltungs* ordinance, the Reich had no need for Ministers other than to fulfil Hitler's orders.

Owing to the pressure of leading industrial elements standing near to the German Government, the boycott was called off at the close of the first day. No blood was shed on that day, but the humiliation of the Jew beggared description. At last it was realized that he was an outcast in the German State. The Third Reich had adopted the anti-Semitism of the National Socialist Party, and the world realized that Germany had become a National Socialist State.

The adverse effect on foreign countries of the Jewish boycott, rendered it urgently necessary for the German Government to achieve some outstanding success in another sphere which would offset the shock that it had suffered to its reputation. Ever since Hitler had become Chancellor he had been anxious to establish closer relations with Mussolini, whom he greatly admired. The Pope had put out feelers for an understanding with the Nazi rulers, for he wished for some clarification of the position of Catholics in Germany and he most urgently desired that Hitler and Dollfuss, as the heads of the two German Catholic States, should become friends.

Hitler felt that it was hardly proper for him to make the approach to Mussolini and the difficulties with Catholicism proved a solution to this delicate position. The Vice-Chancellor should go to the Vatican to discuss the arrangement of a new Concordat, while Göring should go with him to contact Mussolini. The two men were eminently suited to the joint mission. Von Papen was a Papal Chamberlain and consequently in good standing with the Vatican, while Göring's existing personal relations with Mussolini and the Italian Royal Family made him a suitable, if blunt, envoy to the Duce.

For years, even before the Nazi Party came to power, the Vatican had been openly hostile to National Socialism, whose pamphleteers had suggested, among other things, that Pope Pius XI was a Jew, whose proper name was

Lippmann, and that "God had manifested himself not in Jesus Christ but in Adolf Hitler". The Bishop of Mainz in 1930 had issued an ordinance which forbade the Sacrament and Christian burial to members of the Nazi Party, and it was for this reason that Hitler did not attend, although baptized a Catholic, the religious service in company with the other Catholic deputies, on 21 March.

The *Weltanschauung* of the Nazi Party held the view that the Germanic race was a complete world in itself, from which sprang religion, morality, law and philosophy, Church and State.

This ascribing of pride of place to the moral sentiment of the race infringed Christian dogma and was inconsistent with Catholic doctrines.

In his visits to Rome in 1931 and 1932, Göring had attempted to convince the Vatican that there was nothing in the neo-paganism of a section of the Nazi Party, but Rome was not completely convinced. Von Papen, early in 1932, when he made his first alliance with Hitler, had impressed upon Rome that the Nazi Party was a powerful spiritual force for restoring the faith and therefore its path to office should be facilitated. Immediately after this gesture of von Papen, a semi-official policy of trustfulness was adopted by the Vatican towards National Socialism.

Now, in 1933, the German Government found that the political voice of Catholicism was interfering with the speedy application of the co-ordination laws, the South-German States, where Catholic politicians and officials were entrenched, particularly proving obstructionist. The Church had to be deprived of its participation in the control of the State. It will be remembered that this was von Papen's view also: "out of Parliament, back to the Churches."

The Pope was also inordinately fearful of the spread of Communism and he had been told that Herr Hitler was the arch-crusader against the "Red Peril". Consequently the time was opportune to open negotiations for an understanding between Germany and the Holy See.

Von Papen and Göring arrived during Easter week of 1933, Dr. Goebbels following later by air in the Graf Zeppelin.

The German Ministers were received with great show by both Mussolini and the Pope, and von Papen opened the negotiations for a Concordat of incorporation (*Rahmen-Konkordat*) of all previously existing agreements between the Reich, the German Federal States and the Vatican.

Von Papen's great diplomacy was able slowly to overcome the accusations put forward by the Secretary of State in the Vatican and when he returned to Berlin he had convinced everyone in Rome of the reconstructive nature of the Nazi Government and of its rôle as the only bulwark of the West against the rapidly encroaching atheism and Communism from the East, and he brought with him drafts of the Concordat to be settled and signed in Rome in the middle of the summer.

The Vatican was party to this lie about the "bulwark against Communism", because although von Papen omitted to inform the Papal Secretary of State about it, Pacelli already knew that the Treaty of non-aggression between Soviet Russia and the German Republic, signed in 1926 for five years and renewed indefinitely in 1931 by Brüning, had just been confirmed by Hitler, as his first act in the field of Germany's foreign policy.

If von Papen was the Judas Iscariot of the German Catholics, then the political department of the Vatican was the committee of the Pharisees. Truth, trust and decency had apparently ceased to exist in the Holy See as well.

## CHAPTER IX

DURING April, May and June the Nazi Government showed its determination to remove all that stood in its path to complete autocracy. The Nationalist institutions dear to the heart of Papen were destroyed. On 2 May the Christian Trade Union leaders were arrested, the Unions dissolved and the funds confiscated by the State. The Socialist Party, which had even abased itself to voting confidence in Hitler in the Reichstag on 17 May, was dissolved on 22 May, while Hugenberg's Nationalist People's Party and the *Staatspartei* (States Party) "voluntarily" dissolved themselves to save Hugenberg from sharing the fate of Oberfohren.

The two real Catholic Parties, the Centre and the Bavarian People's Party, were suppressed on 4 July, four days before the Concordat was finally agreed as to terms.

Early in May President Roosevelt, nervous of the increasing tension in Europe caused by the rising threats of the Hitler régime in Germany, addressed a dramatic appeal to the heads of all States calling for peace, and for negotiations to remove all misunderstanding. The Reichstag was called for 17 May, till which time the whole world waited with some suspense for Hitler's reply. On 13 May, Franz von Papen took it upon himself to address the *Stahlhelm* at Münster with these words: ". . . We must no longer have a pacific conception of peace. In the Middle Ages it was otherwise. The existence of the individual had no exaggerated importance. Pacifist literature depicts death on the field of battle as an unnatural death, because it does not understand the ancient Germanic horror of death on a bed, and arteriosclerosis appears to be more virile than a bullet. Pacifists dwell on the horror of war dead as if a peace corpse were more aesthetic. The representatives of National Revolution are men and soldiers, who are physically and morally warriors."

This, coming from the Vice-Chancellor of Germany, looked like the Reich's answer to the American President's appeal, but it was only a clumsy attempt on von Papen's part to keep in step with the Nazi leaders and to assure the people that he was with Hitler the whole hog. Nevertheless, it caused a Cabinet crisis and detracted a good deal from Hitler's "pacific" gesture a few days later, when he replied to Roosevelt in his Kroll Opera speech on 17 May.

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While the complete destruction of all the political Parties in the State, except the Nazi Party, was being engineered, with the complete knowledge of von Papen as the Vice-Chancellor, he made a speech at Iburg calling for National unity, using the history of the past to punctuate his appeal. Even while he spoke about the "tragic history of Nationalism", its institutions were being murdered or were committing suicide: "My task to-day is to speak about German National thought. It demands that first of all I touch upon the tragic history of German Nationalism and put it before your eyes. This numerically strong cultured Nation, this proud standard-bearer of the Holy Roman Empire of the German race, has, as the only one of the old cultural Nations, not found its political unity. It has sent streams of noble blood to the world over-seas which had to be settled by white people, and to-day it does not own one square mile of land colonized by it. Bismarck, in 1871, was able successfully to unite the main part of the German Nation into one Reich, but even this small German solution left behind it splinters, which increased more than ever after the unhappy Treaty of Versailles. To-day the Germans of Europe live distributed in no less than twenty States. A third of German people live outside the frontiers of the Reich. The main cause of this condition is to be found in the presence of the East-Middle European belt of mixed Nations, which stretches from Finland to the Adriatic and down across to the Black Sea. In this large territory the Nations have so intergrown that any demarcation of State, National frontier or race is impossible.

"Mr. Wilson did not know this when he proclaimed the

right of self-Government for these Nations; apart from the fact that he was lacking the close connection with the organic peculiarities of Nations, he was scientifically wrongly advised. Even if he had been rightly advised, he would have been unable to find a just solution, because of this covering up of real frontiers.

"The National-Democratic idea of the nineteenth century brought no solution at all to this problem and every trial in such a direction had to go wrong, because it was thought purely mechanically. For the National-Democratic State has a propensity, due to causes of internal uniformity of foreign races which settle inside it, to rape them. Democracy means the absolutism of majority, which as a rule is exercised by a certain race-rulership, but it means in most cases the raping of a minority and promotes the experiment of sucking up strange races within its own frontiers or detaches real parts of the Nation from itself."

While many leaders of Catholic opinion had long since ceased to trust von Papen, in the early weeks of Hitler's chancellorship Monsignor Kaas still retained considerable faith in him, despite his broken promise of January. Through Papen Hitler had received a promise from Kaas, that the Centre Party would join in with the Right Parties in an expression of confidence in the régime. In return, Hitler promised that all Parties adhering to the Government would be brought together in a parliamentary committee, to which the Cabinet would be accountable.

A few weeks later, with the Centre crashing over their heads, Kaas and Brüning both fled abroad, while a decree dated 14 July 1933 announced that the N.S.D.A.P. was "the only political Party in the Reich". So the need for a parliamentary committee had passed. The Nazis were accountable to themselves alone.

A peculiar state of affairs existed in Germany in 1933—the people behaved like rabbits. Liberalism, for which men like Wagner had fought at the barricades, was destroyed over-night. At political meetings, in newspaper articles and in radio broadcasts, the German Nation was led across the treacherous morass of lies and fictitious history, to accept the new aggressive form of Nationalism.

Gradually the Junker and industrial members of the Reichs Cabinet resigned and their places were taken by members of long-standing in the Party, like Schmitt, Hess, and Darré, and the suppression of, and interference with, the rights of the Catholic and Protestant Churches had reached a stage so intense that it could not be reasonably pleaded that they were isolated outbreaks, being obviously organized and protected by officialdom.

On 15 June, von Papen broadcast to the German Nation demanding the complete removal of political power from the Catholics: "The National Revolution has altered the internal political picture of power in its very foundations. Universal insecurity is ruling because no one knows how the forces, which have directed the political organizations up to now, will symptomize themselves and what part they will take in the new political reform.

"When already in my opening words I make a distinction between organization and forces, also between form and content, then this comes about because of the realization that the hour has come which enables us irrevocably to take leave of the world of liberalistic forms. The 'Party' was the Liberal form of political will formation, therefore it was nothing eternal, but a symptom of the times which was condemned to disappearance, owing to its bringing the State to a point of crisis, which we have all experienced, the end of which had to bring about a break with the 'System'.

"The parliamentarianism of the Party System of the nineteenth century and of the Weimar Constitution is no longer with us. We are standing in the process of conservative counter-revolution against the liberal revolution of the eighteenth century, which only broke through in German lands in 1918. He who clings to the dying form condemns himself to reaction and with that, to political death.

"When the Catholic part of the Nation had the *Kulturkampf* forced upon it in the nineteenth century, it moved into a conservative defence position. But when, as a Party, it erected a parliamentary key position, then it denied its conservative *Weltanschauung*.

"The Catholic people felt this misuse of Church and faith for the benefit of the parliamentarians, yes, even for personal



power. It sensed that its Conservative fundamental views were no longer considered in the so-called Catholic Parties.

"It has a fine feeling for the misunderstanding of the basic Christian teaching, which consisted in the similarity of the human being to God being translated, on the Liberal pattern, into the political, and degenerated into equalization. The Centre policy of the last decade was one continual bow before the Liberal spirit and one long denial of Christian Conservatism, and the people sensed that this development could only end in Marxism and Bolshevism.

"The question of the hour is, if, in the faith of the great Conservative uprising of the Nation, there is room at all for a German Catholic body politic. For a Catholic Party most certainly no longer. It is no longer possible to think in the liberal Parliamentary form of the past years.

"It must be told to you that many Catholics are clinging to National Socialism. The time for Catholic militant psychosis is past. Therefore there is no cause for the Catholic section of the people to feel themselves a political minority and thus run the danger of a Ghetto or of a voluntary degradation. There was sense in this attitude when the liberal waves were sweeping the country, and when the Catholic Conservative world's existence was threatened by it.

"But in a revolutionary epoch, which in its kind has to be Conservative, if it does not want to be Bolshevistic, the German Catholic has to play quite another rôle. Here comes the question—does the Christian-Catholic *Weltanschauung* agree at all with the revolutionary politics and activity? It confesses to views which are eternally absolute and which allow of no change, but we must not forget that it is something different, if new thoughts overpower the traditional world, as was the case in 1789, or if it is the case of a counter-revolution, in which historical values fight against intellectualism. In such a happening history, as well as spirit and blood, becomes the bearer of a revolutionary heritage and that is where the totality of our faith has its value. The German people are in a stage of being remoulded, from which it will emerge a united Nation. The Main line is removed. The suppositions for a truly German State have been created. But this German State

is not one of self-purpose. The State of the Germans gets its historical sense only from the kernel and axis of the Reich. The Reich is not the German State, but the historical convocation which has fallen to us. The longing for the Reich breaks through at a time when the German people seem to be too deeply involved in Statecraft and seem to lose themselves in matters of State. Bismarck's State, too, borrowed its name from the Reich.

"The character of the German people is realized from its talents and its history. It bursts the frame of the egoistical and imperialist National State, rose above it, will form something fruitful, bringing order into one part of the earth and will also serve those who live outside our National State community. The Reich gets its name from the richness of our German character (*reich meaning rich, the actual word for richness is Reichtum : Author*).

"This Reich is Christian. Emperor and Reich were protectors of Christendom for a thousand years and defended the Christian world from attacks which came against it. Now, too, the German people have become once more the bearer of the Christian idea, though perhaps they themselves are unconscious of it, but driven forward by their historical mission, they fall within themselves. On the other hand, the anti-Christ is arming for the deciding fight, and again he will be slain by the Christian sense of the German people, which rose up in the last hour against Bolshevism. Against a Bolshevism which not only came storming in from the East, but which is even furthered by a Europe which has become Balkanized since Versailles, which is splintered into millions, into splinter States which lack general world values and internal unity.

"So the Conservative Revolution becomes a Christian counter-revolution, just as the liberal revolution of 1789 founded the rulership of reason and made the Church bells silent. What conclusions are to be drawn in this hour? That the German revolution carries within itself a double kernel: The one out of which the State grows and the one that is the seed for the new Holy Reich of the Germans. The symbolic act at Potsdam pointed out the first phase of the German revolution, but with that, historical growth

is not yet finished, for in the German people there lives not only the longing for the true German State, but also for the Third Reich, this expressive word which ten years ago a great Conservative, Möller van der Bruck, invented, and which ever since has been the pass-word of National Socialism.

"If the German Revolution calmed down into just a National State, it would merely be a late child of 1789. But it will have higher goals than this. The eternal German longing for the Reich breaks through in this rising of the people and gives witness that it is, in truth, a Christian counter-movement against 1789.

"We therefore stand at the beginning of a Christian revolution. The revolutionary power of Christendom is efficacious, since the teachings of Christ created a perfectly new world—the Christian Occident. The newly awakening constructive power of this Christian teaching will give to the European sphere new foundations on which it can further develop—or else its culture will disappear. This process of again Christianizing (Europe) is in its kernel revolutionary and does not contradict in any way the Conservative foundation of Catholicism. For who shall be revolutionary in a Conservative revolution, if not the Conservative.

"So the task of German Catholicism in this time of rebirth becomes clearer and clearer. Just the loss of parliamentary key positions suffered by the Centre, makes it possible to look back and think of the 'deep dimensions of Catholic politics', as Mergeler puts it. We also remember the axis of Catholic tradition which runs through Cologne, Aachen, Trier, Mainz, Frankfort, Bamberg, Regensburg and Vienna. They are symbolical places like Potsdam. They are as much interwoven with the Reich as Potsdam is with the State. The great political line of German Catholicism is a Reich politic. If the heavy weight of Protestant cultural tradition lies in the idea of the State, the idea of the Catholics is in the Reich.

"But now State and Reich do not stand opposite each other like longing and reality, for the Reich idea is as much a reality as the Prussian State idea. There is even an inner connection between Reich and State, and it consists in the fact that the State of the Germans must be microscopical,

which means that the internal building up of the German State shall comply with the Reich thought. The German State must have such a useful form that the German people can fulfil its task of orderliness and of peace, spreading wide over its National frontiers. We all know the requisites for the building up of such a State in the spirit of German Christian Conservatism, as it has been drafted by rare thinkers in statecraft in agreement with the *Quadragesimo Anno*. We want the strong sovereign State, but not the absolutist one.

"These are the anti-Liberal ideas with which alone the world of ideas of 1789 can be overcome. Its impression and its putting over is not only the most noble, but is also the historical mission of German Catholicism. The question of how these views can be put in operation politically, is of course a secondary matter. But after what I have said, it is clear that the founding of a new Party is a sin against Christian Conservatism. But just as wrong would be the locking out of all the spiritual and unifying powers of Catholicism. To give it a home, away from all parties and organizations, is the task of the Federation of the Cross and Eagle. The symbols of the Deliverer and of the Reich are joined in this movement, because they typify the idea of the Holy Reich.

"No one knows the form things will take during the next few years. Only this much is clear—that in the decisive hour of the German people no one must stand aside, and no one who has a clean heart and a good will, must be excluded from this work. A fulfilment of this duty shall be our work in the Federation of the Cross and Eagle. It shall enclose all those who feel out of their Catholic conscience, a responsibility for the future of the Reich."

These were fine words to come from a man with the innocent blood of simple American factory workers on his hands. The hypocrisy of von Papen defies comparison, but he, as will be seen, let the cat out of the bag for history. The German revolution of 1933 was the counter-revolution to the spirit of the French revolution, whose slogan was, Liberty, Equality and Brotherly Love. Therefore the slogan of the Germans was to become Oppression, Inequal-

ity, and Enmity. The world was warned but took no heed.

While speaking kindly of National Socialism, it is obvious that von Papen visualized another State a stage beyond Hitler's Reich. His reference to sovereignty called a protest from the Chancellery, but the Hindenburgs patched up the matter before a quarrel opened. Furthermore, Hitler could not afford to quarrel with von Papen, because he was the signatory designate of the Reich to the Concordat with Rome.

On 8 July 1933, Rome and Berlin officially agreed the terms of the Concordat and Franz von Papen, as signatory designate for the Reich, went to the Vatican at the head of a special delegation to complete the formalities.

The Concordat was signed in the Chancellery of the Vatican on 20 July, accompanied by a brilliant ceremony which was the subject of a special communiqué.

Rome, 20 July, 1933.

Cardinal and Secretary of State Pacelli to-day bestowed on Vice-Chancellor von Papen, the Grand Cross of the Order of Pius, and presented to Ministerial Director Buttman a signed photograph of the Pope. After the delegation had been presented, Head Government Councillor von Böse was created a Commander of the Order of St. Gregory, and Herr von Tschirschky und Bögendorf a Commander of the Order of St. Sylvester. Vice-Chancellor von Papen presented to the Cardinal Secretary of State a Madonna of White Meissen Porcelain as a gift of the Reichs Government. It is one metre high and a copy of the original made by Kirchner in 1732 in the Meissen Porcelain factory.

Under-Secretary of State Archbishop Pizzardo was presented with an oil painting by the German professor Philipp Frank, representing the Park of Sans Souci, and Secretary of State Ottaviani, a silver plate with the German eagle. All gifts bore the dedication: "*A memento of the Reich Concordat 1933.*"

Under the Concordat schools, priests, religious processions and pastoral letters were particularly protected by the Government of the Reich, and the Church had the right to retain its Canon Law in relation to its own affairs.

In return for Catholic clergy refraining from any participation in politics, the Reich undertook to restrict the right of clergy of all other denominations to do so also.

Thus a weapon had been forged against the Lutheran Church of Prussia, and the Catholic Church had won a great victory over Protestantism in German-speaking lands, through the good offices of Herrn von Papen and the Government of Adolf Hitler. The Church of Rome is eternal—the Government of Hitler has but earthly tenure and Catholic diplomacy had won a victory, for the result of which it could afford to wait a century if need be. If, in destroying the power of Protestantism in the Reich, it crippled its own localized Church temporarily, it did not matter—martyrs were expected in the creed.

And when, during the summer of 1933, von Papen read in the Nazi Press that “the Old Testament was a book filled with stories about pimps and cattle drivers”, that “Jesus was Aryan on both parents’ side”, that “God is lonely, so is Hitler”, that “Hitler is a new, greater and more powerful Jesus Christ”, and heard that Church ornaments were being desecrated, clergy were imprisoned for no other reason than that they persisted in upholding the old Testament, he made a few more speeches about the *sacrum imperium* and explained that such manifestations were to be expected in a Christian Conservative revolution, in order to effect the building up of the new order.

Commenting on the Concordat at the time of its initialling on 8 July von Papen remarked that “The clear delimitation of competences provided for would eliminate in future every dispute between Church and State”. Instead of which conflict became all the more pronounced, due, it must be admitted in all fairness, to a desire still manifest in Catholic clerics to interfere in the political life of the Reich. The Concordat was intended to lift the German Catholics out of the arena of Party politics and to give Catholicism all that reasonable freedom and protection it could expect for any Church functioning in a non-Catholic State. The pious hopes of those who expected to benefit from the existence of the Concordat, were raised in vain, for very soon it became all too evident that every clause but one was being

disregarded by the German Government, and that one clause is the only reason why the Vatican has not denounced the Concordat years ago. It is the secret clause, the contents of which it apparently suits neither party to deny, nor divulge.

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Whatever views may be held to the contrary, by the late summer of 1933 it appeared that Hitler had forsworn the real Socialist revolution and was intent only on the more grandiose plan of building up a tremendous automaton called "Germany" at the expense of every class. He had become drunk with power and so ignorant was he of outside influences that his intentions were made known regardless of any protests that might come.

The ex-Crown Prince and several other Princes of the House of Hohenzollern were to be seen at public gatherings of the Nazi Party and at functions of the Government, and von Papen can be excused for stating before fifty important personages at a birthday party of the Prince of Sigmaringen, that Hitler was at that moment contemplating a Hohenzollern restoration, not with Wilhelm II as Kaiser, but with young Frederick of Prussia, his grandson. This whispering was put a stop to by Hitler, in one of his speeches, dropping the hint that Germany had no time for kings or princes, while Goebbels countered von Papen's suggestion in an attack on the monarchical principle.

But Hitler could not afford to be without his Vice-Chancellor, who had brought him the present of the Concordat enabling him thereby to gain some respect from an otherwise increasingly hostile world, nor could he afford (yet) to be without the support of that solid Catholic *bloc* whose interests the Concordat was presumed to protect. Von Papen's lapse was diplomatically smoothed over and the many Nationalists who supported the Monarchy thought that they saw in the situation a cunning gesture from Hitler that he was really a Monarchist, but could not, at this stage, afford to upset the millions in the Nazi movement who leaned more to Socialism than to Nationalism.

Nevertheless, Germans of all religious denominations were perplexed at the attitude of the Government. In

dissolving Ludendorff's neo-Pagan League of Tannenberg, despite its patriotic nature, the Government appeared to be keeping its pledge to "take Christianity under its protection as the basis of our whole moral code" and to recognize again "in the two Christian creeds, most important factors for the preservation of the German people".

By the breaking up of all associations of free-thinkers, public insults and attacks against the Church ceased from that quarter, but coincident with this action, outbursts against organized religion occurred throughout the Reich, which pointed to governmental approval, if not direction.

The Third Reich was claiming the right to unify the people by political devices where religious creeds had split it, and, having co-ordinated all earthly institutions, it now sought to do the same with religion, through the medium of the so-called "German Christians".

The German Christians, a movement which grew up in National Socialism before it gained power, asserted that "the desire for salvation and for the unification of the German people was not in contrast with the Evangelical faith, but a command from God", and the policy of this sect claimed that to help forward the National revival (not in the religious sense) "a united, vital and strong Church of the people was needed", accompanied by "a popular preaching of the gospel which would speak to the German soul, and a German Church in which the people could feel themselves in their element, was necessary."

Thus there arose the concept of a German Church with a God who was German-like, and all other religious institutions had to make way before it. The German Catholics could march side by side with it or lose even that remnant of freedom they were still allowed, despite the Concordat.

With the ratification of the Concordat on 22 September, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Germany took the place of the dissolved Centre Party in matters between Church and State. Whereas hitherto, the Centre Party had been the medium through which the clergy brought grievances to the notice of the State, the Bishops now entered into direct negotiation with the State and based their right to protect the multi-phases of German Catholic



life, not on the law of the Reich, but on the basis of the Concordat, which provoked conflict. Von Papen's group of Catholics, more National than religious, organized in the "Cross and Eagle" existed mainly to propagate his Holy Roman Empire idea. The scope of his group was widened in October by the formation of yet another Catholic organization, sponsored by Rudolf Hess, officially as Hitler's personal deputy, which sought to embrace every Catholic who was prepared to work in co-operation with the Hitler régime for a building up of the Reich.

This organization, the Association of Working German Catholics, was a body which could exercise no political power, but its main function seemed to be the concentration of Catholic effort to bring about greater unity. It was hoped that through this organization complaints of the Catholics could be examined and rectified, whereas in actual practice the complaints were lodged and used as evidence against the complainants.

Von Papen became the Leader of this association, and his inaugural address differed in no way from his appeal to the "Cross and Eagle", unless it was that he paid more attention to the similarity of the Nazi régime to the ideas of the Popes in regard to the relations between capital and labour, and the dignity of work.

To even the most casual observer it now appeared that Franz von Papen agreed more and more with Hitler, or rather, if we remember von Papen's background and associations, that Hitler became more in agreement with the ideas of von Papen. The fate of the twenty-five "unalterable" points of the Nazi programme of 24 February 1920 will illustrate the point much easier.

Those of the twenty-five points which were necessary to a greater Germany were retained, while the mere "socialization" section of the programme was scrapped, never to appear again. If we pause for a moment and inspect these points we can see the effect of von Papen and his industrialist friends on the policy of Herr Hitler, and we can also see the reason for the many revolts, which have taken place from time to time in the Left section of the Nazi movement.

*Points in favour of Conservatism.*

1. The promise of pan-Germanism.
2. Abrogation of the Treaties.
3. Territorial expansion.
- 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 21. Discrimination against the Jew.
22. Formation of a National Army.
23. Censorship of the Press.
25. Centralization of Government.

*Points which favoured Socialism.*

11. The abolition of unearned incomes.
12. Ruthless confiscation of war profit.
13. Nationalization of trusts.
14. Profit-sharing in trade and industry.
15. Extensive provision for old age.
16. Municipalization of department stores, and dividing large businesses up among small traders.
17. Confiscation without compensation of land for common purposes.
18. Abolition of interest on land loans.
19. Death for usurers and profiteers.
20. Greater opportunities for higher education.
24. Religious liberty based on positive Christianity.

From 1933 onwards the whole of Nazi politics underwent a change; those who pressed for a fulfilment of the Socialist side of the programme were destroyed, and those who had made the Nazi revolution possible were either destroyed or cast adrift; of the latter group only Franz von Papen remains, because he was really the soul of the Nazi-Conservative revolution, and because his utility is not yet finished.

With the rise of Hitler-Conservatism in Germany, it became increasingly apparent to the delegates at Geneva that questions of disarmament had to be settled quickly or not at all. The Hitler Government decided the point for the Conference.

In September Germany demanded, without equivocation, that the other Nations should make some contribution

to world disarmament, and thus fulfil their side of the Treaty of Versailles. Germany was presented with a document for her signature, which meant, in effect, that the question of disarmament or rearmament became conditional upon her good behaviour. The new German Government was being refused what Stresemann and Brüning had been offered by the Powers—mutual agreement on disarmament or Germany's right to rise gradually to a proportionate official arming *per capita* population. The situation had become awkward. If it wished to keep its face, the new Government, which had promised to see the rights of every German maintained, could not sit down under this humiliation, and Hindenburg recalled the German delegates from the Disarmament Conference, and in a solemn declaration announced Germany's firm intention to withdraw from membership of the League of Nations.

It was now that the astuteness of the Nazi Government first became noticed. Yes, the world would say, but do the people approve of these high-handed measures? So, in order to prove that the German people stood behind the Government, Hindenburg was persuaded by Hitler to dissolve the Reichstag and the provincial State Parliaments and to announce a general election for 12 November. Actually it was more of a referendum than an election. The German people were being asked to say "Yes" to the policy of Hindenburg, for while Hitler ruled with the rubber stamp, on this occasion he was careful to use the old Field-Marshal as a shield, from behind which he could make his first long nose at the Powers. It was therefore patent to all that Hitler had thrown the onus on to the President because he knew that his reputation with the German people would carry the day. Adolf *Légalité* was abiding by the Constitution—that did not end until the death of Hindenburg.

What drove the German people on solidly behind Hitler in those early days, when it only required a kick from abroad to upset his house of bricks? The sore spot of German honour. The British delegate at the Disarmament Conference, Sir John Simon, while agreeing with the German claim to equality in armaments in principle, pressed for a probationary period of eight years, in which

time Germany was to prove her honesty of purpose. Had he not done so, then the sore spot of German honour would not have been touched and the November election would not have been held. Let Hindenburg's words confirm it.

"To you my German comrades the call now comes to declare yourself for this our policy of honour and peace. To-morrow the entire German people will bear witness that they are united in the feeling of National honour, in the demand for equal rights, and at the same time for genuine and lasting peace. To-morrow all Germans will manifest unitedly, and in an unmistakable manner, that Germany for the future can never again be treated as a second-class Nation . . . follow me and the Chancellor . . . show the world that we have recovered and that with God's help we shall hold fast to Germany unity."

Thus spoke Hindenburg on the eve of the poll, which gave forty million votes to the President and his Chancellor's Government. German unity was the appeal, not the policy of Hitler. Unity for which the old Field-Marshal of the Great War had asked. A chord was struck in the memory of the old and in the imagination of the young—German honour and the desire to prove to the world that it was no second-class Nation. The result of this referendum proved to the world that apparently Germany was behind its Government of reconstruction, and that it was prepared to throw in its lot by supporting Hitler in his attempt to seize hegemony in Central European affairs. To that section of the world which deals in cause and effect it meant more—it meant that some very energetic persons were about to transfer the fight from inside of Germany to without. The Third Reich had almost come into its own; but it had to await the passing of Hindenburg before it could become too self-assertive.

The elections of 12 November gave von Papen remarkable opportunity to build up his Catholic associations and to appear as *persona grata* with Hitler. On the 2 November he and Hitler appeared on the same platform at Essen, and his appeal to all Catholics for collaboration with the Government was sealed by Hitler's handshake in front of the assembled electors.

The elections once over, the office of Vice-Chancellor seemed a sinecure, useful only from Hitler's point of view insofar as its holder still remained as liaison between the Government and the President. On his part von Papen was beginning to find himself more and more isolated, for those of his Junker friends, who were at first in the Cabinet of National concentration, had by now either been forced out or had been worn down to a point when resignation came as a happy relief.

Junkerdom as such had ceased to rule the Reich. Its place was taken by the old guard of the Hitler party, Göring, Goebbels and Hess, and the new men, it was hoped, would come from the Ordensburg of the Nazi Junkerdom.<sup>1</sup>

Politics in the Third Reich, except those drawing-room whisperings so dear to his heart, had passed beyond Papen's control. He could only await the self-destruction of the régime, and against that time he concentrated almost exclusively upon the organization of his "Cross and Eagle" movement, hoping with its help and through the support of certain sections of National Socialism, to bring about a new régime—his Holy Roman Empire of Western Germans. Until that time was nigh, he saw that Catholic Germany could only retain its heritage of the past under the protection of the Concordat, and he further saw that if it was to endure it must refrain from meddling in politics.

But it was not so easy. The Bishops refused to condemn completely every phase of the old Weimar Constitution—they also kept flaunting before the Nazis, clause by clause, the Concordat, in their condemnation of the totalitarian nature of the régime. The Nazis (not so much the Government, as the local "Hitlers") attacked the Bishops because of their resistance to the Government's attempt to unify religion under the symbol of the crooked cross, until soon the friction between Church and State culminated in bitter controversy, suppression and physical violence, a condition which has continued down to the present day.

<sup>1</sup> This is the castle of the knights of the Teutonic Order in Marienburg, which has been taken over by the Nazi Party and converted into a place of training, alleged to be very monastic and spartan, for selected young men of the Party who are intended to be turned out on the famous leader principle, and who in due course are destined to become the aristocracy of the new Germany.

In vain von Papen strove to bring about a more conciliatory attitude and to prevent the controversy over the Concordat from becoming a means of inflaming the masses; but whereas previously, all negotiations with the Government had been carried on with that Dr. Buttman who attended at the Christening of the Concordat in Rome and who was now gracing the directors' office of the Bavarian State Library, now matters had to be discussed with such men as Dr. Robert Ley of the *Arbeitsfront* and Baldur von Schirach of the Hitler Youth, both of whom are notorious for their uncompromising hostility to traditional religions. Conciliation was impossible.

On 31 December Cardinal Faulhaber delivered a slashing attack on the new "German Church", which had, among other things, recently demanded the substitution of German legend and saga for the Old Testament. He maintained that religion was not peculiar to one Nation and that the Catholic Church, particularly, saw no reason why it should be co-ordinated with any single Nation. The Nazi retort was typical of the new régime—they said that the Catholics were not being asked to join this truly German religion and why could they not mind their own business. A few days later a number of Catholic priests were arrested during divine service in their own churches and taken to concentration camps. Both sides observed the Concordat by attacking each other.

In the middle of January of 1934, Franz von Papen made a speech at Gleiwitz in Silesia, in which he defended the attitude of National Socialism to Catholicism. He insisted that the Hitler Government's policy was being prosecuted along lines laid down by Pope Leo XII in *Rerum Novarum* and by Pope Pius XI in the *Quadragesimo Anno*, and firmly asserted that the Concordat, which he had so helped to bring about, was tangible proof that the Reich wished to work with the Church. He further pointed to history, in which one could find that Germany was the first country to break with the nineteenth-century tradition of *laissez faire* and to embrace Catholic ethics and ideas. Love of race, he contended, did not mean hatred of another

race, nor did it conflict in any way with Christian principles. He wound up by demanding, as in all his speeches, the unreserved support of all Catholics for the Hitler Government.

. A little while later, the following creed came into use among the Ley section of the "German Christians":—

We believe in Adolf Hitler. We believe that the sole faith and salvation of our people is National Socialism. We believe there is a God in heaven who created us, led us and publicly laid his blessing upon us. We believe that God has sent us Adolf Hitler so that Germany may receive a foundation for its existence through all eternity. Adolf Hitler, hail victory!

From early spring until well into the summer, Hitler and von Papen were constantly receiving delegations from Catholic areas in Germany, protesting at the non-fulfilment of the Concordat.

By May the atmosphere in Berlin had become electric. The left wing of the Nazis, under Roehm, was planning to stage a Putsch against the Government in order to make Hitler pay more attention to those Socialist points in the Nazi programme which he had conveniently forgotten to put into his Government's programme. The Right in Germany, led by von Papen, was planning a wide-spread programme of public protest, in which it had the approval of Hindenburg, who had seen all the literature to be distributed and who had passed all the proofs of the speeches to be made, against the totalitarianism of the régime.

The beginning of the Papen effort was the speech he made at Marburg, in which he attacked the loose living of many leaders of the Nazi Party and called for a return to a constitutional Government which would be "Christian Conservative" so that Germany might again be permitted to return to the society of Nations. This speech led opinion abroad to believe that real Conservatism was returning to power.

A few days after von Papen had delivered this attack on the régime, of which it must be remembered he was Vice-Chancellor, he saw Hitler, who agreed with him that the Catholic Church was in need of protection, concluding

“ . . . that was a bad breach of faith on your part, you know . . . for the rest I am 95 per cent of your way of thinking.”

On 25 June, negotiations between the Bishops and the Government began, in order to bring about a permanent interpretation of the Concordat.

Five days later, on the 30 June, came the bloody massacre, in which the innocent suffered with the guilty. In Berlin and in Munich hundreds were killed out of hand and thousands arrested, the Junkers bearing greater casualties than the Proletarian “liberators”.

Von Papen escaped the shooting through the timely intervention of an ordinary Reichswehr soldier, who either had received no official notification of the names of the proposed victims, or else had thought that the Vice-Chancellor of the Reich was above treason against the State. But his immediate associates were not so fortunate—von Bose, the recipient of the Order of St. Gregory, fell before the bullets of the S.S., while Edgar Jung, his philosopher friend (who was credited by many with the preparation of von Papen’s last speech at Marburg, and whose mind certainly breaks through in many of the more erudite speeches made by Papen), Klausener and Probst, the latter both leaders of Catholic action, were reported to have “committed suicide”. General Kurt von Schleicher would no longer plan to make and re-make governments, for both he and his wife were reported as “shot while evading arrest”. It was indeed a bloody episode in the making of a Holy Empire of the German people.

None of the people in von Papen’s Catholic circle were in any way concerned with the Roehm plan to bring about a second revolution—their only crime was that by protest they sought to bring about an abatement of the persecution of the religious bodies and a lessening of the dictatorial policy of the Hitler régime.

With the ink scarcely dry upon the world’s newspapers reporting this bloody purge, it was announced by the German Catholic hierarchy that it had arrived at a satisfactory agreement with the Reichs Government for the operation of the Concordat. A few days later the *Osservatore*



*Romano* screamed aloud for vengeance for the shooting of Klausener and Probst, the while Hitler and the Pope negotiated another agreement providing for the standing of Catholic Youth organizations in the Reich.

Franz von Papen, a much disillusioned man, resigned from the Government of the Third Reich and took himself off to Neudeck to inform the President of the details of the fate of his many Junker friends who had fallen to the totalitarian bullets.

But von Papen's service to the Reich was not to finish so abruptly. While there were many in the Government who thought that he would best be removed from further opposition, Hitler thought otherwise.

The recall of Dr. Reith, the German Ambassador to Austria, who had rather foolishly and prematurely involved the Reich in the shooting of Dr. Dollfuss, by openly negotiating on behalf of the Nazi Putschists against the *Bundeskanszleramt*, rendered the Embassy vacant in Vienna.

On 26 July 1934, Herr Hitler appointed von Papen special envoy to Austria in the hope that better relations between the two countries would be restored, as the official announcement of the appointment to the mission ran, but actually, as history records, to suborn the Austrian Ministers from their duty to their country and to an allegiance to Hitler's Reich.

The following is a strange letter to receive a month after one's life has been attempted by the agents of the sender.

Bayreuth.

26 July, 1934.

DEAR HERR VON PAPEN,

As a result of the events in Vienna I have found myself compelled to propose to the Reichs President the recall of the German Minister in Vienna, Dr. Reith, since in response to a demand from Austrian Ministers, or from the Austrian insurgents, he was ready to give his approval to an arrangement between these two parties with reference to the liberation and safe conduct of the insurgents, without first consulting the German Reichs Government. The Minister has thus without reason involved the German Reich in an Austrian internal affair. The outrage against the Austrian Chancellor, which

is most strongly regretted and condemned by the Government of the German Reich, has through no fault of ours further disturbed the political situation in Europe, which was already unstable.

It is, therefore, my wish to contribute if possible to a relaxation of tension in the general situation, and particularly to see the relationship to the German-Austrian State, which for some time has been troubled, brought back into normal and friendly channels.

For this reason, dear Herr von Papen, I request you to accept this important task, for since our collaboration in the Cabinet you have possessed, and still possess, my fullest and most unrestricted trust.

I have therefore proposed to the President of the Reich that you shall be appointed for a limited period, and as a special mission, to the post of German Minister in Vienna, retiring from the Reichs Cabinet and being relieved of your office as Commissioner for the Saar. In this post you will be directly subordinate to myself.

Thanking you again to-day for all that you once did to bring together the Government of National uprising, and since then in common with us, for Germany.

I am, yours very sincerely  
ADOLF HITLER.

It will be noticed that Herr Hitler was at pains to disclaim all knowledge of or participation in the July outrage in which Dollfuss lost his life, but it cannot pass without comment that Planetta and Holzweber, both of whom were shot in company with a number of others, after being found guilty of the assassination of Dollfuss by an Austrian tribunal, were lauded as heroes after the *Anschluss* and since have been added to the list of National Socialist martyrs in the Nazi calendar.

Paul von Hindenburg, dying at Neudeck, sent his friend a brief note, in which is neither hypocrisy nor verbosity.

"If I send you now to Vienna as diplomatic representative of the Reich, it is in the sincere hope that you will succeed in establishing normal and friendly relations with our kinsmen, the Austrian people. My best wishes accompany you for the performance of this responsible duty."

Eight days later he was dead. This letter to von Papen was probably the last document by the aged Field-Marshal; on 2 August, "Papa" Hindenburg, as he was affectionately

known to millions of the German people, passed beyond the grip of disturbing German politics. He had run his race and had died in harness, exactly twenty years after the outbreak of that great war in which he had played so great a part and yet achieved so little. His last will exhorted the German people to stand resolutely behind Adolf Hitler and his Government and through that to see that German unity was maintained. The document also reminded the German Nation that the true guardian of the State was the Reichswehr and “. . . its lofty mission must be put to good account”.

Upon the passing of Hindenburg, by decree Adolf Hitler assumed the office of President which was merged in that of the Chancellorship. The title of President was dispensed with and Hitler became known as the “Leader and Chancellor of the German Empire”, with autonomous power to appoint his own delegates and representatives.

The Third Reich had now arrived in all its power. The revolution was really over and there was no authority in the land but Hitler's. From this fateful date, 2 August 1934, the German people moved steadily forward to its destiny—greatness or oblivion.

From now onwards Germany appeared as Germany. It was not the question of the National Socialist Party ruling a country against its will. By the truculence of the Hitler régime and its full-blooded attitude to foreign problems, it became apparent that the majority of the people were obsessed with the idea of a coming new greatness. Every move made in opposition to various clauses of the Treaties was applauded by the people, until Hitler was the “people's Chancellor” to the masses of simple German folk.

All these things Franz von Papen saw only too well, so he went off to Vienna with a favourite dictum of Frederick the Great singing in his brain, thankful meanwhile for a whole skin. “The great art of policy is not to swim against the stream, but to turn all events to one's own profit. It consists rather in deriving advantage from favourable conjunctures than in preparing such conjunctures. Wisdom is well qualified to keep what one possesses; but boldness alone can acquire.”

## CHAPTER X

"NOTHING will stand in the way of the union of Austria with Germany, when this question shall have ceased to interest the peoples whom it affects," once said the Prelate-Chancellor Ignatius Seipel, pragmatist and Prussophobe, who believed in the pre-eminence of the whole German race, yet who kept such questions as *Zollverein* and *Anschluss* at arm's length, and there is no doubt that many Austrians echoed his words. But let him proceed a little further: "the sole question is to know whether the pessimists, who think that time is not working in their favour, but against them, would have reason to rejoice if it were possible. The optimists think otherwise. They do not despair of the realization of an ideal, because that realization appears possible only at a distant and still undetermined date. . . ."

Words from a theologian and not from the leader of a State, but they gave hope to many on both sides of the Austro-German frontier that union would come. But this was years before Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of the Reich.

In 1921, several of the States in the Austrian Federal Union held a plebiscite on the question of *Anschluss* with the Reich and it is noteworthy that more than 90 per cent of the votes were cast in favour of such a union.

In the early days of 1931, as a first step towards political union, a customs union (*Zollunion*) was proposed by Dr. Curtius, then German Foreign Minister, to Dr. Schobel, who, with a typically Austrian lack of diplomatic ability, agreed to it with alacrity, at the same time agreeing to keep the scheme a secret, until such time as it was ripe to disclose the perfected union to the British, French and Italian Governments. If the Austrians blundered then the Germans

blundered too, for premature news of the plan leaked<sup>d</sup> through the Foreign Office itself in Berlin.

Such incidents mark the whole of Austro-German relations and it was not surprising to find the whole world up in arms against the suggestion, for had not the international financiers, not excluding Baron Rothschild and the Bank of England, come to the timely rescue of the *Landbank* and the *Kreditbank* in Vienna only a few weeks before? Geneva was in a ferment and Dr. Édouard Benes, then Foreign Secretary of Czechoslovakia, made the fatal mistake of turning pamphleteer against the Reich and Austria.

He took a step which, it must be admitted, was unministerial, and which was the first nail in the coffin of his country, for it has never been forgotten by Herr Hitler, nor for that matter by many German leaders of all views. The Orbis printing company of Prague circulated a blue-covered booklet in which Benes opposed at length the Curtius-Schobel scheme, and every person who was considered to be capable of moulding National and international opinion went down to breakfast one morning to find such a neatly printed and bound copy of Benes' work in his own particular language, so neat and so attractive that he was moved to read it and, having read on, he was left with the impression that a breach of the Treaty—the sacred and inviolable Treaty, of which there was much talked about but very little done—was about to be perpetrated.

Important personages being thus informed, small wonder was it that when the question was referred to the Hague Tribunal by the League in May 1931, the Court's judgement, given in the following September, was to the effect that while the Customs Union between Germany and Austria did not contravene the Treaty proper, it was forbidden by the protocol signed at Geneva on 4 October 1922, when Austria, in return for a considerable loan from the ex-Allied Powers under League administration, agreed to do no act which would contravene Article 88 of the Treaty of Saint-Germain. This clause bound Austria to remain independent in all matters. Curtius had perforce to resign, and at this stage in Austria's history, a man, who cannot be divorced from the events of the following few

rs, entered the Austrian Cabinet as Minister for Agriculture and Forestry—Dr. Engelbert Dollfuss, the Metternich of a country fast going to ruin by its own hands and the pampering of affectionate, well-intended liberal democratic States, all of whom vainly hoped to keep it the buttress of Democracy in a wilderness of totalitarianism—North and South.

Dollfuss strove to keep Austria an independent State with the aid of foreign money and a doubtful promise of Fascist bayonets from south of the Brenner. He, good Catholic as he was, built the semblance of a corporatist Christian State, after he had slaughtered thousands of Trade Unionists in the name of authoritarian Christianity and with artillery bought from Krupp and Skoda ruined the luxurious flat dwellings on which British money had been lavishly expended in their construction, at a time when the long-suffering English town worker, on low wages or without employment, was forced to live only a little higher than the animals. The terror spread by the Christian Government was improved upon by the terror of the illegal Nazi and other Parties in Austria of this period. Yet the Democracies were regaled with stories of reconstruction and that the new Austria conformed with the concept of the *Quadragesimo Anno*, which was all nonsense.

The Austria of the last ten years has consisted of several millions of easy going people, who, in the main, wanted to be left alone, who were natural hoteliers and entertainers, who cared not a twopenny rap for Communism or Nazi-ism, but who were annoyed at being disturbed from their *Gemütlichkeit* and *Schlamperei* by a bunch of tub-thumping adventurers, who but for the war would have remained nobodies.

The swindling proclivities of the directors of the top-heavy insurance companies, banks and tourist agencies have proved that. The lavishing of shareholders' money on scatter-brained film ventures, encouraged by those actresses who became their light-of-loves for the nonce, would have been accorded much wider publicity but for

certain wires that were pulled not far from Geneva and London. Mad schemes for exploiting natural gas, and the building of factories whose products could have entered no market, went forward, and all with foreign money. With apparently nothing else to do but play at politics and soldiers, big business men armed simpletons, unemployed and ruthless adventurers into several private armies, one looking to Italy for help, another to Munich and Berlin and others to the Democracies. Their aims, except the Nazis, were inchoate. They stamped and shouted, held meetings and on the march looked like a ragged army from a film cartoon. They all copied big brother Germany, but the likeness ceased to exist after the formation of the army—for in Germany these private armies, of all shades of thought, before 1933 had purpose. The Austrians were purposeless and their Christian State was an empty sham.

The bulk of Austrian population was centred around Vienna and that city had long since ceased to be truly Austrian—in post-war days it had become a place of poverty-stricken aristocracy, who let rooms to middle class foreign tourists, but who dreamed of the past—of the Emperor—and who hated the Germans. Built around this core of one-time aristocrats, were the international bourgeoisie—Jews, Czechs, Italians, Frenchmen and others, most of whom used the city for their business schemes because the capitals of their countries of origin were too hot to hold them.

The people living on the land were the real Austrians and they had become Nazified long before many Germans knew of such a movement. It was to the Austrian Tyrol that Göring and many others fled in 1923, and ever since that time the farmers and peasants of Austria had held an ever-open door to those Nazi fugitives from Democratic justice who fled before the decrees of Brüning.

To most foreigners, Chancellor Dollfuss became a symbol rather than a living man. His lack of inches impressed his personality upon all those who came in contact with him. Like Hitler he lived abstemiously—why he remained Chancellor of Austria only he could have told.

He had no ambitions to become great or wealthy and he must have known that his cause was the medium through which his underlings feathered their nests.

He once told me that Austria would rise again—but— I answered, to what can she rise? The new States to the South and the now independent Hungary could not offer any hope of expansion and Austria could not absorb Germany. I reminded the Chancellor that the population of his country was something less than greater London and such a State had no right to tax its people and borrow on bad security, in order to maintain a cumbersome bureaucracy, diplomats and *Kleine Beamten*. His reply was startling. "There are always the South German States."

I believe that this idea grew as time went on and accounted for much of the animosity that sprang up between Adolf Hitler, the Chancellor of the German Reich, and Engelbert Dollfuss, the Chancellor of Federal Austria. When Dollfuss made the foregoing remark I had just been to see him in the *Bundekanzleramt* on the *Ballhaus Platz* to obtain some ideas about his Christian Corporate State. As I drove away into the Ring Strasse with "*fundamentum regnorum iusticia*" repeating itself in my mind, I was shocked out of my reverie by the sound of light artillery pounding away at the Karl Marx Hof, in which the workers had barricaded themselves.

A few months later, Dollfuss was murdered, but his was an empty sacrifice. If the whole of Austria was anti-Nazi and anti-German, then his death should have rallied every force of decent man to a common front against the criminals. The very organization built on his red-white-red Austria, the *Vaterländische Front*, should have been the nucleus of that great Austria (which political intriguers maintained was in danger) which was to bring about that rise of which the murdered Chancellor dreamed. Where was Rüdiger Starhemberg, whose ancestor drove the Turks from the gates of Vienna? Carrying on a personal feud with Major Emil Fey about the *Heimwehr* and hoping that Mussolini would send help to ward off the menace from Berlin and Munich.

And so it came about that Franz von Papen, one-time



Chancellor of the Reich and until lately Vice-Chancellor in the Third Reich, was presently in Vienna, to take full advantage of these intrigues and feuds.

Von Papen's early days in Vienna were difficult. Beyond the usual presentation of his credentials he took little or no part in the social and diplomatic life. Indeed, directly after presenting his letter of accreditation he returned to Germany, remaining there until October 1934. His presence in Vienna was not only as German Ambassador, but was considered by many to be as also the personal representative of the Führer and Reichs Kanzler, Adolf Hitler.

The clumsy intervention of the German Ambassador, Reith, on the day of the assassination of Dollfuss made things difficult for von Papen, and although he was expected to persuade the Austrians to agree voluntarily to the *Anschluss*, he knew that his rôle of peace-maker was looked upon with doubt, for, after all, he had only recently escaped from a similar fate to that which met Dollfuss while yet in his prime. He was the German Ambassador to the Federal State of Austria, true—but many remembered that he was almost a refugee, for the Austrian Government had only consented to his appointment because of a petition from the military nobility of Austria, presented by no less a personage than Prince Schönburg-Hartenstein, requesting that their German fellow-nobleman be allowed sanctuary in Vienna. Not only Socialism is international.

Back in Germany, he was clearing up his duties as Commissioner of the Saar, in which territory, incidentally, much activity was afoot, for in the early days of 1935, 13 January to be exact, the Saarlanders were to decide if they wished to return to the Reich or remain under the League of Nations.

Now in this matter of the Saar, von Papen was a great prop to the Hitler movement and it must have been very short-sighted policy that sought his destruction on 30 June, for the Saar with its coalmines, steelworks and multiplicity of industrial enterprises, was essential as an integral part of the Third Reich, if its future was to be assured. Von Papen was also a power to be reckoned with in Saarbrücken, the Metropolis of the Saar industrial area, for his estate

at Wallenfängen and his business interests, coupled with his influence among leaders of the French Right, could make or break the German case for return to the Reich.

The ways of statesmen are admittedly odd, but the German Führer, brilliant tactician as he is, has methods of his own in which their somewhat heterodox application always brings the required results. That is the secret of every German diplomatic success since 1933. Not its brilliance by world standards, but by its element of surprise and in being opposite to the expected.

For several years leading up to the date of the plebiscite, the Saar was in many respects in a similar position to Danzig in the present year of 1939. It was wholly German (but that does not mean Nazi) and while a few thousand vociferated a wish for remaining *in status quo ante* plebiscite, their shouts were motivated by something other than a hatred of Germany or a love for the League or the French. They were chiefly emigrés from the Third Reich or permanent inhabitants who were members of the Communist and Social Democratic Parties, and thus sworn to enmity of Nazi-ism and Fascism.

The Saar territory was nominally governed by the League under a Commissioner (at that time Mr., now Sir, Geoffrey Knox) and his duties were rendered difficult by the existence of the National Socialist German Front numbering about fifty thousand members, who acted as wardens to control the sympathy of the inhabitants. As the date of the plebiscite drew near a swarm of storm troopers entered the territory from Germany and they became known as the *Eiserne Brigade*. All this made it appear likely that a certain amount of duress would be applied at the voting and France thought of opposing the German infiltration with force, Barthou even going to the extent of threatening to send troops into the territory.

Had he done so he would have precipitated another European war, in fact many wiseacres were openly saying better now than in 1940—to which the obvious retort was better never than now. France feared a Putsch before the plebiscite—and the Commissioner was also very gloomy about the outcome of it all, so much so that he approached

Mr. Anthony Eden, then British delegate to Geneva, with a request for troops to be sent into the Saar to keep order.

After much negotiation a composite force of English, Italians, Swedes and Dutchmen was sent—the army of the League of Nations—now in 1939 the League cannot muster a platoon of international soldiers against real aggression.

Von Papen moved about the Saar territory from time to time, talking first to this functionary and then to that. National Socialist leaders in the district talked of Hitler as the new German “Christ”, and the lot of the Catholic priesthood was hard indeed, for vengeance was sworn against them once the plebiscite was past and the territory restored to Germany. Whatever the political views of the Catholic priests, the Catholic laity were all for return to the Reich and they numbered more than a half of the population.

Suddenly, without a word of warning, the Catholic Church announced that all good Catholics should vote for a return to the Reich. The days of martyrdom had passed. The Catholic Bishops of Trier and Speyer ceased their opposition to a natural wish, for they were not willing to play off their authority against that of the Reich and they also suddenly realized that they lived in Germany and were hostages to the Reichs Government.

The Vatican dared not make a political pronouncement on the issue in the face of popular opinion, and in view of the significance that such a move would take on in territories quite beyond the almost parochial question of the Saar.

Von Papen, Papal Chamberlain and negotiator of the Concordat, had rendered another service to the new Germany. It mattered not to him if it was a Nazi Germany or a Nationalist Germany—he could await the turn of events, and it was his Germany. The Saar voted overwhelmingly, thanks to a real desire at that time on the part of the inhabitants, to return to the homeland, ably assisted by the negative activities of European politicians, Herrn von Papen, the National Socialist storm troops and an earlier pronouncement of the Vatican. Queer times produce strange bedmates.

Meanwhile in Austria Dr. Kurt von Schuschnigg ruled in the place of Dollfuss. A typical *Beamter*, he was not worldly wise enough to steer a derelict Nation, the remnant of a glorious Empire, across the shallows of a disturbed European sea. He claimed to be the heir to the mantle of Dollfuss and his faithful executor. But Dollfuss lay in the tomb and it had become a shrine. The authority from the greatest shrine of all loses much of its force in the present dissatisfied world, how then could the shrine of a mortal give authority? The masses were apathetic, bored and sadly disillusioned. They had come to look upon machine-guns before the public buildings as something which was a part of the street, like pillar-boxes and telephone booths. The Socialists, that is to say the workers, remained aloof from membership of the *Vaterländische Front*, into whose all-sheltering arms the late Chancellor had seemingly committed the destiny of Austria.

The *Ostmärkische Sturmsharen*, the *Christlich Deutscher Turnverein*, the *Freiheitsbund* and the *Heimwehr*, were all supposed to be dissolved into the *Vaterländische Front*—the fatherland front, or as some people will persist in mis-calling it—the patriotic front—but the members refused to yield their separate identities. The Austrian Nazi Party in any case had been declared illegal but it gathered strength underground.

Many writers on Austria have stated that the peasantry were the backbone of the Austria of Dollfuss and Schuschnigg and have further declared that they were anti-Nazi. That was not so, but they may be now.

The peasant cannot understand this Christian Social Corporate State idea, but he does understand the vigorous brutality of Nazi policy—and he is stupefied by the progress (internal and foreign) of the Third Reich, of which incidentally he approves when he compares it with the decadence of his Austria, which had been lavishly assisted to get on its feet with foreign gold. Yet, he reasons, all hands are against this new Germany of the North Germans led by a South German. The plain Austrian also attached little importance to the alleged friendship of Italy. When Signor Mussolini affirmed that “the independence of Austria is

decisive for the peace and equilibrium of Europe. The key position of Austria is similar to the key positions of Belgium and Switzerland. These three States must remain intact"—the man in the street in Austria remembered 1915 and the fate of the Triple Alliance.

In fine, when Franz von Papen went to Vienna he found a country bereft of even the source of authority, let alone the exercise of it. There was no rallying point, such as a Monarch or elder statesman, which could attract the unqualified support of every section of political thought and action in a National emergency. And yet his work was difficult.

The President, Wilhelm Miklas, a simple school-master turned politician, cut him on every possible occasion and Cardinal Innitzer scolded him for his attack on the Austrian episcopate in 1933, at a time when he was Vice-Chancellor of the German Reich. Which started an argument.

Von Papen maintained that his speech was justified because the Austrian Bishops were condemning National Socialism. The Cardinal retorted that the Princes of the Church had a duty to their flock in warning it against the neo-paganism of the Nazi movement. With ponderous theological argument which the German Ambassador was quite capable of following, the Cardinal dwelt upon the simplicity of human souls and their need for protection against subversive dogma. Then came the final sentence which shook von Papen out of his usual complacency. "But we shall see better times, your Excellency, when the future will bring union with a greater Germany." Here was help indeed, thought von Papen.

"When the better times are here," softly continued his Eminence, "I hope that my fellow countrymen in the Sudetenland will not be overlooked." Had he heard aright or was it just a wonderful dream. No! There stood the Cardinal-Archbishop of Vienna before him, with arm outstretched in farewell. Von Papen leaned forward and mechanically touched his Eminence's ring with his lips and was very soon back at the Embassy, inditing a brief despatch to Berlin.

One stronghold at least was as good as taken and von

Papen marvelled at his luck, for Cardinals do not grow on trees—here was a collaborator indeed and with all the weight of the Church behind him. The bastions would soon fall.

But the year 1935 went on far into the summer, with advance into the stronghold of Austrian life proving difficult. The social ice was breaking far too slowly for a man of von Papen's cavalry training. Again and again urgent demands from Berlin came to him—action and more action was needed. Gradually, the German Ambassador found his way into a wider social circle and his charming manner was a pleasant surprise from what the naïve Austrians had been led to believe and to expect of the erstwhile Uhlan. Here was no filibuster or ranting Nazi—here was a Catholic Conservative gentleman of the old school.

A whispering campaign was started in the best Papen tradition. Surely this pious worshipper, who regularly attended early mass in *Stephans Kirche*, was not really the Judas of the German Catholic movement. Yet rumour had it that he had been the harbinger of National Socialism in Germany. And so polite circles in Vienna accepted the special envoy; and their fears were completely put at rest when the Director of the *Reichspost*, the mouthpiece of the Austrian Government, declared to a packed assembly of the Catholic Society of Academicians, that Herr von Papen was no Judas, for had he not arranged the Concordat between the Reich and Rome, after Brüning and Kaas had failed to do so? His presence in Vienna could have no treacherous implication—Vienna should be proud that such a distinguished German should continue to live there, after all the gutter abuse with which he had to contend.

While the German envoy's behaviour was of the most correct and diplomatic nature, the same could not be said of that of the Austrian National Socialists. As a political Party they were banned in Schuschnigg's Austria, but they managed to preserve their cohesion under a variety of guises—sports associations, rambling clubs and the like.

The thing most of all annoying to the official representative of the Reich in Vienna was the importunity of these "sporting associations", as they were continually seeking

from his hands financial and moral support in the pursuit of their underground activities, political intrigues, party and personal feuds. Their constant attendance at the Embassy embarrassed him, and he saw his finely-woven plans going wrong by this too apparent association with the heads of the illegal movement. Moreover, he had no real liking for their company, because they reminded him too much of those men in far-away America who had drawn his pay some twenty-two years ago. So as the weeks went by, he worked upon a plan, for whose completion he drew freely from his past experiences in such matters.

. . . . .

The orchestra had just broken into the opening bars of Beethoven's magnificent *Eroica*, when his Excellency the German Ambassador, Herr von Papen, entered the Concert Hall in the *Lothringer Strasse* and took his seat, bowing first here and then there to the numerous personages drawn to the concert given by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra to inaugurate the winter season of 1935-6. The occasion was significant. The baton was in the hand of Bruno Walter, whose interpretation of Beethoven had delighted many in Berlin until 1933. Now he was an outcast, having become the target of abuse from National Socialists, to whom he appeared as the embodiment of all things alien in art and music.

The Austrian Chancellor, slowly recovering from the terrible shock of his wife's death in a motor accident in July, was now, in the autumn, making his first public appearance and had been the recipient of much condolence in the foyer from the early arrivals. The German Ambassador caught the eye of Dr. Schuschnigg and bowed across the intervening seats. Schuschnigg had been received by the concert-goers with dignified respect and sympathy for his bereavement, but Bruno Walter, the moment he stepped on to the conductor's rostrum, was given a wild ovation.

Franz von Papen was angry but did not show it. With wrapt attention he followed every beat of the maestro's baton, the while inwardly fuming. Those people in Berlin, what do they know of the difficulty of my task, he thought.

He had just received another urgent despatch calling for a little more speed in his negotiations, and to make matters worse, he was being badgered by the Austrian industrialists and Catholic leaders to complete the "bridge" between the two German-speaking States. Confound the hurry of these people!

They had messed up the Concordat which he had arranged, or rather, in his view, the Nazi leaders had not taken advantage of the ace that he had dealt them. Were they going to spoil his new aim—a bloodless *Anschluss*—by their impetuous attitude? In just over a year he had patched up the blunder of the abortive Putsch of the previous July, and the murder of Dollfuss had become a mere incident in a fast-moving world. What mattered the opinion of the plebeians of the National Socialists, if only the army and the heavy industrialists still believed in him and in his sacrifices of prestige to achieve the greatness of a yet newer Germany—remote from race theories and marching men, but in which the aristocrat found his proper place.

The programme over, he moved across the hall to the Chancellor's seat. Before the *élite* of Austrian society and officialdom, Dr. Schuschnigg shook him warmly by the hand. Von Papen expressed delight at meeting the Chancellor again at so pleasant a function and he was very glad to find him so fully recovered from his recent sorrow. Did not Walter excel himself this evening? He was distressed beyond measure to find that Austria and Germany were still so far apart, facing each other across frontiers bristling with arms, and with not even a decent interchange of such cultural necessities as newspapers, books, films and plays.

The Austrian Chancellor thought the same and nodded his willingness for his Excellency to continue, for after all he considered himself a match in diplomacy for the one-time Military Attaché, who had been Chancellor of the great German Reich and had surrendered office willy-nilly to a simple Austrian. Von Papen continued in his best insinuating tone, with well-chosen words and immaculate delivery, and Schuschnigg was as a snake before the



charmer. Aye, Papen can charm, as many international politicians know. Did he not charm the Lausanne Conference into making Germany a gift of reparations?

Continuing, the special envoy mentioned that for some while past he had been thinking that the time was now ripe to show the world German solidarity. The international situation was fraught with impending disaster and Italy's hands were very much tied in the Abyssinian affair, for Mussolini had incurred the displeasure of both England and France. If some sort of agreement was now made to regularize Austro-German relations, always of course, on the distinct understanding that Austria entered into that agreement as a sovereign Power, England and France would unquestionably look with favour on it, because both would see in it another blow at Italy, for with an understanding arrived at with Germany, Austria would no longer require the Italian support, on which, incidentally, insinuated von Papen, the late lamented Chancellor Dollfuss had relied too much.

Schuschnigg nodded assent to all this, because he was just a little tired of continually being reminded that his Government rested on the support of Italian bayonets—but he did not articulate the latter thought. Indeed, he gave von Papen clearly to understand that he was in error on one point in his reasoning. Austria's foreign policy was not dependent upon Italian goodwill. Austria, it was true, was in Treaty with Rome on economic matters affecting the Danube basin, but the whole matter stopped at that.

Austria, continued Schuschnigg, desired more than anything else peace with all and there was no need for Herrn von Papen or, for that matter, for any other man to tell him that Austria was a German State. He was proud to lead a German Austria, but it must remain an independent Austria. The blame for bad relations between Austria and the Reich must be sought elsewhere than in Vienna. And so the thrust and parry with the foils of diplomatic words and niceties continued. There was no need for Austria to take fright at German National Socialism, purred von Papen, for had not the Führer openly declared that the Nazi creed was not for export? Furthermore, was not his

own presence in Vienna proof that Germanism and Nazism were two distinct entities; for the most credulous could not contend that he was a Nazi. He would go farther, and would suggest that the internal situation in the Reich would be bettered by a reconciliation between the two countries—most certainly the anti-Catholic attitude would disappear.

Here was Dr. Schuschnigg's great opportunity to appear before the world as a true German and thus fulfil a great historic European mission. Von Papen suggested, with all diffidence, that the hour for understanding had arrived. The Führer himself, well known by now for his pacific intentions, would welcome and indeed would attach the greatest significance to such a move for understanding from Austria, which after all was his native home.

Every European country was offered a reciprocal peace pact, continued von Papen, and therefore how appropriate it would become if Austria, the Führer's native Austria, would be the first to make the noble gesture of peace and conciliation among the nations.

The Austrian Chancellor had not heard words like these before from a German. He had been accustomed to veiled threats in official documents and bitter accusations hurled into the ether from the German broadcasting stations, but never dulcet tones like these. Schuschnigg turned the suggestion over in his mind—he shifted his position, looked at the German Ambassador with that long piercing glance which was a favourite habit in those days of short-lived power—and felt a little awkward. Confound this slim and elegant figure standing before him, so sure of himself. If only he had more of the ways of the world at his command. Von Papen was clever, mused the Chancellor, but he could find no flaw in the suggestion that would further weaken an already weakened Austria, for years the bone of contention at Geneva and the political battle-ground of troublemakers within. In fact, a freely negotiated treaty of friendship with the growing Third Reich, in which Austria stood as an equal partner, would be helpful economically to his troubled land; or so thought the studious Schuschnigg.

· Meanwhile von Papen, with a pleasant smile playing around his lips, waited. After a minute or two of dead silence, the Chancellor gave his answer. Yes! in principle the idea appealed, but—and this was of primary importance—did the German Ambassador speak for his Government or was he merely voicing a personally cherished wish? He gathered that Herr von Papen had intended to convey that he thought a proposal along the lines put forward would be the basis of a full discussion for a proposed alliance of friendship and mutual understanding. Was that so?

Von Papen hastened to reply that he was certainly voicing his own personal views. The occasion—music—in which all Germans found a meeting-place in common, had moved him spontaneously to approach the Chancellor. Dr. Schuschnigg was naturally aware that if he had received an official order to open conversations along the lines just now indicated, he was not so lacking in etiquette as not to have requested a formal interview at the *Bundeskanzleramt*. The German envoy emphasized the personal nature of this pleasant encounter, but he would like to add that he was sure that any view he had expressed had in no way gone beyond the view on the situation held by his supreme chief, Adolf Hitler. For the rest, as his Excellency the Federal Chancellor knew, the views of the *Beamten* in the Wilhelm Strasse counted for nothing.

Papen appeared slightly hesitant. Did the Federal Chancellor wish that he should discreetly acquaint the Führer of this evening's conversation, after which official talks could doubtless be opened. The Chancellor was very willing for Hitler to learn of his agreement with von Papen's surprising, yet very acceptable proposal, but—Herr von Papen would please remember when making his report, that a *conditio sine qua non* of the official resumption of correct relations between Austria and Germany, and one which would be rigidly insisted upon, was the inviolability of Austria's independence and a freedom from German interference in her domestic affairs. "Natürlich, Herr Bundeskanzler," readily replied von Papen, "I thought that I had made that point clear earlier in the conversation," and with the promise of an early official

call at the Chancellery immediately news came to hand on the project from Berlin, the suave Westphalian nobleman took his leave.

But the German Führer was much too busy to act upon Papen's report of the conversation. Papen and Austria were shelved, for while they were always there to be used according to policy, certain not inconsiderable events in Italian policy in relation to the rest of Europe were moving so rapidly that another *coup* was necessary for Germany to keep step for her place in Europe.

The Italian campaign in East Africa and the ensuing differences with France and Britain, brought about a collapse of the Stresa agreement. In trepidation Europe waited for what it thought was to come.

The British Fleet, which had been under a cloud for several years, owing to questions of discipline being aired rather openly in the world Press, was being moved about the Eastern Mediterranean, and Whitehall set about a partial mobilization of the three services. Since that time Britain has been unwittingly at war—engaged in a war of nerves—the first stage of the new form that future warfare will take. Since that time the British Empire has had to be prepared to take on all comers, regardless of allies or the lack of them. Since that time Britain has been very near to war with Italy, Germany and Japan, individually and as a combination against her.

As the leader of some misplaced idea of justice for all at the League of Nations, as the spokesman of right, England has incurred the bitter enmity of those Powers whose expansion, at the expense of weaker states, she was forced to oppose.

Through this chauvinistic pseudo-knight-errantry England has played into the hands of the Hitlers, Mussolinis, Papens and Görings, if not the Stalins, of this mad age. Through this vainglorious succouring with its Nation's treasure and its Nation's word (with an implied hypothecation of its manhood) while its people looked on bewildered, furious and dismayed, of the League-created States of

Europe—threatening to oppose and in the end condoning and supporting aggression, the tide of events has become too much for these Utopians, who find themselves now forced back into the pursuit of a traditional policy—the protection of Britain's interests by her own resources and might.

From the events leading up to the winter of 1935, the German Führer saw that he could pursue his plans regardless of Franco-British opposition. The gauntlet thrown down by Mussolini to the British Navy proved that, and Hitler's own views were strengthened by his opinion of the Italian armed forces—of which in private conversation to several persons he has spoken in the most contemptuous terms.

Every informed and thinking person saw that the Italo-British quarrel would be used by Germany to exploit her chances in Central and Eastern Europe. These things cannot be done overnight—nothing that Germany has achieved in Europe has been brought about as suddenly as we are led to believe. The plodding method of the German mind may not be understood by Anglo-Saxons, but every major *coup* has been the result of years of planning, for the Nazis are only completing a structure the foundations of which were laid long ago. Adolphe Legalité (as he will go down in history) has always put another jewel in the German diadem by repeated protestations of loyalty to principles and legally observing agreements.

In March 1935 he denounced the military clauses of Versailles and now through the winter of 1935-36 he was scheming to perfect his plan for the remilitarization of the Rhineland and the repudiation of the German obligations under the Pact of Locarno. Vienna could wait—with his Western frontiers secured, he could deal with Austria in his own way and in his own time. The urgent warnings earlier sent to Papen were forgotten and the former General Staff officer was left to deploy his forces, pending the new orders for the attack.

When the German Führer coolly told the Army Command that he intended to occupy the Rhineland, its senior members were aghast, for they knew that Germany was not yet in a position to meet France in the field, much less

again to take on a world in arms. Diplomats, Generals and industrialists urged him to reconsider. "No! I will not," said Hitler. "I never go back once my mind is made up."

"France will march," said von Fritsch.

"She will not, because she can not," retorted Hitler, and history has shown that once more the mystic of Munich was right in his appraisal of international reaction to German progress.

While France and England hesitated and Italy was too busy on matters more her own affair, German troops were occupying the Rhenish barracks and the orders which the German High Command had prepared and issued to every commanding officer providing for an orderly withdrawal in the event of a French attack, were torn up.

The 7 March 1936 came, with England indifferent and France afraid, while Italy, then not quite realizing that with her flank protected, Germany would now soon be on the Brenner, and as a spiteful thrust at those two Powers with whom she had pledged herself to prevent such a contingency, took no interest in the proceedings.

From that time onward it appeared that England was not concerned with happenings in Europe. From conversations with leading English statesmen, Herr Hitler was entitled to assume that non-intervention in Europe would from thenceforward become British policy. Small wonder then that he proceeded so gaily upon a hunting expedition for trophies snatched from the League.

Germany moved slowly towards Italy and an entente was imminent. Germany had not participated in sanctions and Italy had not opposed the new watch on the Rhine. Every smaller European State took fright and many unhitched the wagon of State from the lumbering League.

Poland had contracted a pact of non-aggression with Germany, and Beck, suspicious of the intentions of the Western Powers, leaned more and more towards Berlin—for Poland also had her eyes on territory which she relied upon obtaining through the good offices of her great Western neighbour and now partner. History will record that the reorientation of Polish Foreign policy in 1939 had not so much to do with Corridors and Free Cities, as with

stolen lands and the unwillingness to pay the piper in return. It would have been infinitely cheaper in the long run if England had given Poland a piece of her Colonial territory, compared with what she is paying and will have to pay for the Polish rape of Teschen. For Adolf Hitler never forgets nor forgives a slight or injury.

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In Vienna Dr. Schuschnigg sat in his room in the Chancellery and wondered at Franco-British impotence. Were these the two great Nations, whose ministers had promised his country aid and whose bankers had for long been props to his country's empty exchequer? He became the most frightened of all European leaders. His brave speeches were meaningless without the force of France and Britain. His draconian measures against Socialists and Nazis alike were merely county court orders without the Western Powers and they had seemingly deserted him. Why had he trusted them? Why had he been so truculently anti-Nazi and anti-Socialist?

He feared the approach of Nemesis, for he had been like a bad boy with the Germans, cocking a snout at them from behind the backs of his big brother and sister, John and Marianne.

Why! even the vast American tourist traffic had fallen off in his Austria, because the practical Americans had become a little tired of the comic opera warfare in Vienna; in any case, if they wanted to hear the *phut phut* of bullets, why should they go farther than Chicago and other haunts of gangsters?

The intervening months had been awkward ones for Herrn von Papen, for he had been unable to give the Austrian Chancellor any hope that their so very promising discussion at the Philharmonic Concert would bear fruit. To meet was an embarrassment to both; Von Papen feeling a considerable loss of personal prestige (for after all he had as good as told Schuschnigg that what he thought to-day, Herr Hitler would think to-morrow), while Schuschnigg, whose heart had leapt at von Papen's first suggestion, because it offered a dignified escape from Mussolini, felt that it was not incumbent upon him to reopen the

matter—and so the months passed—months fraught with anxiety for Schuschnigg.

If von Papen was embarrassed he was also annoyed. He felt that his suggestion in the early autumn of 1935 was being slighted in Berlin, and his agents, who were placed in the Austrian Government offices and in the social circles around the Federal Chancellor, reported that Schuschnigg was so keen to bring about a pact that he had put out unofficial feelers to the Nazi hierarchy in Berlin and had also sounded the European Governments as to their possible reactions to such a pact.

The announcement in March 1936 of the preliminary welding of the Berlin-Rome axis so seriously perturbed Schuschnigg that it was with difficulty that two of Mussolini's most trusted diplomats, the Italian Ambassador in Vienna, Preziosi, and his press attaché, Morreale, convinced him that the Italian guarantee of Austrian integrity still remained valid, in spite of the Germano-Italian entente.

Mussolini, conscious of the Austrian's doubts and wishing at the same time to show the Democracies that he had time to spare to watch his Danubian interests, despite Ethiopia, sanctions and the Mediterranean veiled conflict, called a conference in Rome of the States of the Rome Protocols, to which Dr. Schuschnigg travelled with the fear in his heart that he was about to be repudiated. This Conference was also to demonstrate that German-Italian friendship, just then in bud, was not capable of being wrecked on the rocks of the Austrian Tyrol.

Schuschnigg told Mussolini of the von Papen suggestion and asked if such an understanding with Berlin would coincide with Italian views. Without wasting words Signor Mussolini replied with great enthusiasm: "I cannot too emphatically advise you to come to terms with Germany. My services are at your disposal. You know that Herr Hitler is already deeply in my debt; he can only emerge from his foreign political isolation with Italy's help. I will personally see that no harm comes of it. The best thing for you to do is to re-establish normal relations with Germany with the guarantee of Italy behind it all. You have just had a drastic demonstration of the weakness of the



Western Powers. The gentleman in Paris and in London have not been able to force me to my knees, even though they incited the whole world against me. In spite of the screams from semi-official quarters in Paris, the occupation of the Rhineland went through without a hitch.

"My dear friend, we are witnessing the final crack-up of the Western Democracies. Austria's place is at the side of the dynamic Powers. That is how you can best ensure Austrian independence."

Kurt von Schuschnigg heard, but he only half believed. He was suspicious of Italian "friendship", but he was forced to accept it for two main reasons. The first was that he had undertaken to continue the Dollfuss policy of retaining the shelter of the Italian sunshade and the second, and more physically important, was that the *Heimwehr*, a member of which he had with him at the Rome Conference, the Foreign Secretary, Berger-Waldenegg, was wholly Italian-minded. In fact it was modelled on the idea of the *Fascisti*. If a German-Austrian pact meant no bad feelings with the Italian dictator, then this, thought Schuschnigg, would help to keep order at home, for the main reason for the *Heimwehr's* continued existence was that it represented an auxiliary army against German aggression. Once normal relations with Germany were restored, the bogey of Nazi invasion would disappear and with it would quickly go the *Heimwehr*. The Federal Chancellor was not without his cunning. He was always having trouble with the *Heimwehr*, that Christian-Socialist army founded by Seipel. It was intended to be a dynamic force to consolidate Austria—instead, with its constant truculence and eternal bickerings, it destroyed the last remnant of the Hapsburg Empire. In the end it became a growth wholly alien to Austrian tradition.

The *Heimwehr*, like its Nazi prototype in Germany, obtained its finance from "big" business and armament firms. Two personalities continually fought for its leadership, Prince Starhemberg and Major Emil Fey, the latter a much decorated ex-Imperial officer, who at one time was looked upon as the strong man of Austria, when he was Vice-Chancellor and Minister of Public Security in the

Dollfuss régime. He, like Dollfuss, was surrounded by an army of corrupt officials, who in 1933, tried to sell me interviews at 1,000 Schillings a session.

Just after the Concert Hall talk with von Papen, Schuschnigg made a pact with Starhemberg, which resulted in Fey being ousted from the leadership of the *Heimwehr* and from the Government. Now, on his return from Rome, Schuschnigg, strong in the conviction that a light was appearing to lead his Austria out of the darkness, decided to terminate this *Heimwehr* comic opera business—he issued a decree liquidating the *Heimwehr*, to which Starhemberg replied with that reckless and cheap bravado which seemed to have characterized all European revolutionary movements since the war: “The *Heimwehr* will disappear only over my dead body.” He is still alive, but the *Heimwehr* went.

Many have said that Austria was betrayed, but a glance at the state of affairs within that country, gives ample evidence that treachery was not an unknown factor there either. Austria was betrayed, but as much by her own sons as by the special envoy living in the Metternich Strasse. First the Federal Chancellor stoops to conspire with one *Heimwehr* leader to destroy the political power of the other. That done, he proceeds to work behind the back of Mussolini, using the Duce’s newly-found German ally as a factor to free him from leaning on Italy. The atmosphere of intrigue hung heavily over the *Bundeskanzleramt*, and the double-crusading cross, which was used as a badge by the *Vaterländische Front* was a fitting, although doubtless unconsciously chosen, symbol.

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Day by day reports of Schuschnigg’s activities were placed on von Papen’s desk and sometimes they made his own past seen inconsiderable. There was that little scandal of the Phoenix-Wien Life Insurance Company, whose late director had spread the shareholders money all over Vienna to achieve influence and latterly in an endeavour to buy justice and prevent enquiry into his defalcations. It became a practical application of the old adage—the thieves were falling out.

In order to discredit Schuschnigg because of the *Heimwehr* ban, Prince Starhemberg made public the details of the scandal of the Phoenix-Wien affair, when it was disclosed that the Federal Chancellor's own organization, the *Ostmärkische Sturmsharen*, had benefited by 2,000 Austrian Schillings. But what about the *Heimwehr*, retorted the Chancellor, they have received bribes to the tune of 95,000 Schillings, so their guilt is much greater than mine.

So the merry game went on in all its fantastic gerry-mandering, with bleatings of "Who will save my Austria?" in different keys. Vienna has given the world great composers and librettists; perhaps a Lehar or Schnitzler will one day give us a light opera or satirical drama of this period, when Austria was being bled by her own sons, all of whom imagined themselves to be either the mantle-wearers of Metternich or the torch-bearers of a new golden age.

Von Papen watched these antics with amusement and hope, and when Prince Starhemberg commenced wholesale demonstrations against the Chancellor and appealing to the Duce, he knew that the rot was well set in.

Starhemberg's telegram to Mussolini of 10 May 1936, which congratulated him on the rape of Ethiopia, beginning "In the name of those who fight for Fascism in Austria and in my own name . . ." and which concluded ". . . long live the victory of the Fascist idea in the whole world", brought cries of protest from many foreign Powers and alarm to the Federal Chancellor, so he dismissed the Prince from all his offices, excepting, be it noted, that of patron of the Fatherland Front's Ladies' Aid.

Starhemberg went post-haste to Rome and was received by Mussolini, but his hopes were short-lived. Not for him the Chancellor's rôle. Practically coincident with the reception of Starhemberg, Mussolini sent Schuschnigg a wire of greetings and support. This was on 16 May. Schuschnigg felt that Starhemberg was the cause of the hitch in the agreement suggested by von Papen. The Prince had got into bad odour during the early days of the Nazi movement, when he was a staunch and active supporter of the N.S.D.A.P. in Germany as well as in Austria, and since that time had been a bitter opponent of Hitler. Therefore

the removal of the *Heimwehr* Prince was a gesture of conciliation to Germany and a sign of Austria's independence of Italy.

Victor Adler once said of the Hapsburgs that they ruled with "absolutismus gemildert durch Schlamperei", and in this phase of Schuschnigg's rule, it could be also said that he ruled with an absolutism tempered with slovenliness. He reshuffled his Cabinet, planned to introduce universal military service, talked of fighting and cooed: "It is the love of Austria that always binds us together." Whereupon all sections of his *Vaterländische Front* recommenced their bickerings, office-seeking and money-grabbing activities.

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During the first week in May 1936, Herr von Papen called upon the Chancellor and informed him that at last Berlin had authorized him to open the talks, which both hoped would lead up to a Treaty of Friendship between the two German Powers. While Schuschnigg was suspicious of the German Ambassador, he yet admired him and everything German.

Schuschnigg's activities in life were controlled by the obsession that he was a German and that Austria was German. Heinrich Brüning and Kurt von Schuschnigg had much in common, and this quality in common von Papen had used when dealing with both of them. Both, throughout their lives, had suffered from an inferiority complex towards all things German, because Catholicism had come more and more under the powerful organizing influence of the North Germans. Neither of these men were born to lead. Circumstances affecting both Germany and Austria after the war threw power into their laps, and because to them it was a strange thing they had recourse to men of higher birth (but not necessarily stronger character) to guide their hands aright on the helm of State—and in both instances the steering was put out of gear.

Schuschnigg admired all that the North Germans had done for the Catholic cause. The Centre Party (of which Herr von Papen had been a distinguished member), the Munich-Gladbach school for Catholic-Social Politics, the

Christian Trade Unions, the German People's Association of Catholic Germany, were all glorious examples of what German thought and action had achieved. Social Catholic Germanism had penetrated into Lutheran Prussia and since 1867 had become entwined with the new German ideology. Rome leaned towards Germany, for the German Catholic body in Wilhelm II's time had produced many great and noble men. The German Centre Party had been a pillar of strength in Imperial Germany and Schuschnigg was not blind to its influence (thinking upon the large number of Ministers it had provided for the Reich) in the lately demised Weimar Republic.

All these factors then, coupled with the brilliant Papen's whisperings that the Nazis would not always be in power in the Reich, urged Schuschnigg on to a closer union with Germany. As for Papen—well, thought the Federal Chancellor—he has been Reichs Chancellor once, he may well be again, and after all he had great influence at the Vatican. Besides, he was a gentleman.

And so the last Chancellor of Austria went to the Conference chamber with *Germania docet* as his motto, while von Papen thought with Horace, *quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus*.

The Chancellor was well aware that von Papen would drive a hard bargain—he was afraid of a German penetration into Austria, despite the condition of non-interference insisted upon by him. Schuschnigg felt, however, that if the pact was announced, it would provide a legal basis, which could not be ignored by the other States. Already, before the Treaty was agreed upon, he was contemplating breach by Hitler and the nature his appeal to the world Powers would take, together with the basis of his arguments with which he would demand their support against Germany. Schuschnigg admired Germany, but if it did not keep its bargain, then. . . .

He knew quite well that every real economic interest in Austria was behind him in his desire for an understanding with Germany, which would thus thereby put an end to the economic war which was then being waged, but he found that it was on just these economic points that von

Papen was most obstinate. In appearing to give way to Austria's economic needs, he demanded of Schuschnigg further political advantages.

The German Ambassador had spent much thought upon the framing of each clause and many messages had gone to and from Hitler in the drafting. He knew that he had to conclude an agreement with Austria which would be acceptable to Hitler. He knew the Führer's ambitions and therefore, however harmless the agreement appeared to be, it had to possess the properties of the Trojan horse, for Austria had to be absorbed in due time. About one thing von Papen was firm. Too long had Austrian newspapers provided a platform for international criticism of the German National Socialist Government. While agreeing with Austrian Sovereignty and the non-interference clause, he clearly indicated to Schuschnigg that the organs of public opinion must be more controlled and evince a more friendly attitude to Austria's new friend.

To this agreement was reached on a reciprocal basis, but Schuschnigg, while refusing to bring any Austrian National Socialist into his Cabinet, was forced to include "ultra-Nationals" in the reshuffle, and most of those who came in for ministerial and assistant ministerial office had all some previous contact with Germany.

For some months past the Federal Chancellor had leaned upon a young diplomat, who some years previously had been brought home to Vienna from the Austrian Embassy in Paris, because of his ability. He had found favour with a succession of Ministers, until ultimately he was appointed the contact man between the Federal President, Wilhelm Miklas, and the Federal Chancellor, ranking as Vice-Chairman of the Presidential Cabinet.

The young man's name was Guido Schmidt, and his office came into existence owing to the coolness existing between the President and the Chancellor. The President was a Christian-Socialist, a die-hard Democrat, a pacifist and the respected representative of organized Catholicism in Austria. Above all, he was dead set against the policy that had been pursued by Dollfuss and continued by Schuschnigg, for he abhorred oppression. Yet his office

as President was almost nominal, and on many occasions it was brought home to him that the rulership resided in the person of the Chancellor for the time being. So he made the best of a bad job, being another of those heads of State who felt that he had been called by God to preside over his Nation's destiny. The kingly trait has become very common of late among Presidents, which must restore the pride of Englishmen in their Sovereign, who can walk about his land as an ordinary English country gentleman.

Miklas sought a means to minimize his association with the Chancellor and that means was Dr. Guido Schmidt, a man with charming ways who knew everything and everybody. In fact, the von Papen of Austria. Schmidt's duties consisted in reporting to the President, after access to all documents from the Embassies and elsewhere, the daily trend of foreign affairs. He became both a go-between and a buffer, rounding off unpleasant edges before Cabinet decisions reached the President.

Guido Schmidt became indispensable to both Miklas and Schuschnigg, and after the latter's bereavement, following upon the death of his wife, he found himself drawn to the President's liaison. He appreciated how Schmidt had arranged all matters relating to his wife's burial so efficiently, and since that time in 1934 he had come to make of him confidant and friend. To Guido Schmidt, Kurt von Schuschnigg's mind was an open book. He was enthusiastic over the prospects of an Austro-German *rapprochement*. He saw in it personal advancement, which the existing Austrian conditions did not allow. By nature, he was out of sympathy with the *Heimwehr* and other similar Christian-Socialist movements.

Dr. Guido Schmidt was brought into the Government, his presence there, it was explained, being in the nature of a guarantor for the Treaty of Friendship between Germany and Austria which was about to be signed. No one seemed to bother, and consequently to ask, why Schmidt of all people, should be chosen to hold the balance between the two countries.

On Schuschnigg's part, it did not seem worth while to mention Dr. Schmidt's German ties or his closeness to the

German Ambassador. All that was known publicly was that for some years he had been thought highly of by the President and was a close friend of the Chancellor.

Everyone in the know, however, was aware that Schmidt was an outsider in Catholic political circles and in this he was not alone, for Franz von Papen had been just as much an outsider to the Centre Party in the Germany of the Weimar Republic—and this was indeed a remarkable coincidence of fate. The two men were soon working together, because Schuschnigg had delegated much of the work on the Treaty, which was nearly ready, to Schmidt. Von Papen and Schmidt found that they understood each other perfectly.

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For several weeks prior to the actual signing of the agreement, the Federal Chancellor had received many warnings, from home and abroad, against entering into such a compact. The Austrian missions, in close contact with the outside world as they were, protested, and he replied with words that were empty of meaning. He denounced isolation as dangerous idealism and contended that Austrian opinion was built on much too narrow a basis to justify Austrian independence. Yet he had demanded of von Papen independence and non-interference. Schuschnigg was of the opinion that unless Austria openly acknowledged herself to be Germanic and appearing before the world as the second German State, she could not expect to justify her right to live by the side of the great Third Reich. Schuschnigg told many critics that they were being influenced by the propaganda of German emigrés and French Chauvinists.

A great bulk of the opposition came from the Legitimist Party and he knew that Otto von Hapsburg could count on considerable support from both inside and outside of Austria. Weighing up all the evidence and having read all the documents of the time, I am forced to the conclusion, uncharitable as it may seem, that Schuschnigg was fighting to retain a Federal Austria with powerful German support, an Austria in which as Chancellor he was the leading man,



instead of having to serve under a Monarch (in the event of a restoration), who in all probability had another Chancellor up his sleeve.

In the early days of June, the Chancellor ordered an intensive Press campaign to counter the opposition to the pact, on which he had set his mind no less enthusiastically than von Papen. At all costs forces had to be mobilized to meet this opposition. Letter after letter was sent to the Embassies abroad, instructing the Ministers to explain to foreign Governments and to the foreign Press, that the pact was a valuable contribution to relieving the tense and unstable general situation in Europe.

The whole set of documents relating to the above, contained nothing but apologia and the stirrings of a guilty conscience.

If Herr von Schuschnigg had handed over Austria to the Reich in 1936, much hypocrisy and bloodshed, imprisonment and robbery would have been avoided, and in all probability he would have remained a free man, because the coming events prove that he was in no way capable of resisting a German infiltration, neither did he, until the last moment, have any real wish to oppose it.

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While from a purely practical point of view Austria's post-war independence has always seemed a joke, many would have wished, from purely sentimental reasons alone, for her to have remained the big city with satellite towns and villages in the Danube basin. Whereas those who wished for and approved of *Anschluss* with Germany, would have preferred it to have come about under a régime other than the totalitarian one of Herr Hitler.

From the political and strategical standpoint it can be argued that an independent Austria was essential to the keeping of a European balance of power and demarcation of various groupings.

Working on this assumption was a very erudite man, one Ernst Karl Winter. At the time of the Treaty of Friendship he was deputy Lord Mayor of Vienna, a position to which he had been appointed in an attempt to appease

the working classes after the February shambles of 1934. He was a historian of some note and a clear thinker. Originally a die-hard Austrian Conservative and a Royalist, he moved over to the Left as a protest against Fascism and Nazi-ism.

A personal friend of Schuschnigg, he was nevertheless a severe critic of his policy and it was the Federal Chancellor's wont to use him as a political sounding-board, listening for the echo, which he knew would be the real opinion of the Austrian masses—yet Winter wielded no public political influence.

When Schuschnigg first intimated to Winter that a Treaty of Friendship with Germany was a possibility, he flew into a towering rage. "So you too are trying to play a Papen part, Herr Chancellor," Winter hurled at Schuschnigg, and raced off at terrific pace in a disquisition on the subject of the mission of Austria. The Chancellor was betraying that mission, Europe and the Catholic cause, and a world catastrophe was prophesied by the learned deputy Lord Mayor.

Winter was told that the Chancellor's mind was made up on the question of Austro-German relations and that the negotiations would be pressed forward to their conclusion. "Austrian foreign policy will also in the future always bear in mind that it considers itself a German State and will conform with the foreign aims of the Government of the German Reich, so long as these are directed towards the preservation of peace." Those were the Chancellor's last words to Winter and with them he fondly imagined that he had caged the Nazi beast in the North. Or did he?

The Federal Chancellor knew that Winter was working for a reorientation of Austrian policy and he knew that he had fairly substantial support. This new policy to be advocated by Winter was nothing less than a complete repudiation of the idea of closer relations with Germany, the breaking away from Italy, with a new Austrian Government to be supported by the Western Democracies, whose help he thought to enlist by a change in internal affairs, namely, a National front which would conciliate the Left and Right forces around a centre core of a restoration and

the ultimate institution of a Social and benevolent Monarchy, based on that of England. He felt that the monarchical idea would be a guarantee of English support and that the reconciliation with the Left would appeal to France.

Knowing all this, Schuschnigg pressed for a whipping up of enthusiasm at home and he turned to Guido Schmidt for help. Schmidt's suggestions proved him to be a brilliant disciple of Dr. Joseph Goebbels. The Press could be left to him and the Chancellor approved every step of the way, which points beyond all doubt to a betrayal, but the betrayal came from within. The Austrian heads of mission were kept in semi-ignorance of what was afoot, or, to be more correct, of the details of what was intended, right down to within a few days before the pact was signed. Their information came more from their colleagues in other Embassies than from the *Ballhausplatz*, yet still they did their duty by strongly advising against precipitate action.

Schmidt's plan for weaning the Austrian people away from opposition to friendship with Germany was as crafty as it was brilliant, and it is hard to believe that a Minister could resort to such tactics in order to assist another country. The Press was to be given an apparent free hand, which would result in each section saying something slightly different, for it would be a disaster if the public came to think that it was being influenced.

So it was arranged that the official information bureau, the *Heimatsdienst*, the *Wiener Zeitung*, the *Reichspost* and the political correspondents of the Foreign Office, should represent in fairly united fashion the Government's official view, as it had been given out, while it was arranged that the Liberal-Radical Press should be given a temporary renewed lease of freedom and encouraged to discourse with scepticism, stressing that actions spoke louder than words. The one or two royalist newspapers were left to suggest that the Treaty would leave Austria free to adopt any other form of Government, since this was a purely internal question and under the terms of the draft Treaty it was to be seen that Austria was recognized as a Sovereign State.

Foreign countries, particularly those having a large financial stake in Austria, were to be told that the move would grant additional economic security to Austria, that it was Austria's contribution to European appeasement and that under no circumstances did agreement with the German National Socialist Government imply an internal agreement with, and recognition of, the Austrian National Socialists. So the world was fooled.

The Treaty was signed and published on 11 July 1936 and Dr. Guido Schmidt took over the Foreign Office, thus providing von Papen with a powerful ally right at the heart of Austria.

"From now on we have solid ground beneath our feet . . . a solemn agreement has willingly been made by the Third Reich recognizing Austria's independence. . . . Hitler, of his own free will has offered mutual pacts of guarantee. His international prestige will not allow him to treat the first of these as 'a scrap of paper'," Schuschnigg said on the signing of the Treaty.

In the light of German avowed intention and policy the Austrian Chancellor had either a very high opinion of his own ability to deal with the Reich or he was purposely lulling Austrian and world opinion. In the face of his willing and eager approval of Schmidt's Press campaign, just concluded, the latter seems the most likely. But what he could expect to gain by cheating Hitler or the world Powers, will now never be made clear.

Whatever his plans, Dr. Kurt von Schuschnigg handed to Herrn Adolf Hitler the necessary legal document, in the shape of the Treaty of Friendship, with which the independence of Austria was destroyed.

Franz von Papen, the architect of the Treaty, had achieved another success for the Third Reich, for which its Führer should be eternally thankful.

Having opened the door to power in 1933, von Papen had now drawn the chain and bolts away from the draw-bridge of Austria and it was descending slowly across the moat.

## CHAPTER XI

HARDLY had the ink had time to dry upon the signatures of the parties to the Treaty of Friendship, before there began that long-drawn-out period of misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the clauses, which was to characterize the new Austria, which was to be "independent" and yet was to march side by side with the Reich in all foreign matters, "so long as these were directed towards the preservation of peace".

Recriminations set in over the inclusion of Schmidt as Foreign Minister, and Dr. Edmund Glaise-Horstenau as Minister without portfolio. Many said that these two gentlemen were spies and saboteurs cleverly introduced into the Austrian camp by Berlin through Herrn von Papen, who, these critics reminded Schuschnigg, had much experience in such things. "Nonsense," retorted Schuschnigg, "Schmidt is my closest friend and my new Minister, Glaise-Horstenau is a symbol to Berlin and to the world of the reconciliation of all truly 'Nationalist' movements with the Government—together we shall work side by side with the German Reich on the reconstruction of Austria."

The radio, newspaper and passport war that had been carried on for several years between the two countries came to an end, and it was again possible to buy the leading organs of opinion of one country in the cities and towns of the other.

With the Treaty came amnesty for many, of all shades of political thought, who had been imprisoned for acts of political terrorism. Only the worst characters were still detained, chiefly those who had been found guilty of complicity in the July Putsch of 1934 and in the murder of Dollfuss.

In order to "proceed side by side with German foreign policy" as Chancellor Schuschnigg saw it, the Austrian Government issued instructions to the Press, which only a blind man could fail to see would be an irritant to Germany. The Austrian Press carried the story that Hitler had abandoned the illegal National Socialist movement, nay, he had done more, he had condemned it. All Austrian Nazis were made to see that if they continued their policy against the Government they would be guilty of treason against it and of forsaking the famous leader principle of National Socialism, by what was claimed would be open insubordination against its supreme head, Adolf Hitler.

But the Austrian Nazis very early on showed their lack of dejection at the alleged betrayal by Hitler. The first batch of released prisoners under the amnesty made merry on a scale unprecedented in Vienna for years and when the Olympic torch, which was being carried from Greece to Berlin for the Olympic Games, passed through Vienna, the incident was made an excuse to hold a huge Nazi demonstration so provocative that the *Vaterländische Front* staged a counter-demonstration immediately afterwards. From all of which it appeared that what the Treaty had set out to end, had in effect only just begun—discord and greater cause for strife between the two countries.

From the end of July 1936 Austrian political life was dominated by arguments over the interpretation of the Treaty and it soon became obvious that such a state of affairs could not go on interminably.

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When Franz von Papen went to Vienna in 1934 as special envoy he was appointed "for a limited period, and as a special mission, to the post of German Minister in Vienna", directly subordinate to the German Führer (who was then Chancellor, Hindenburg being still alive and acting as President of the Reich). After the signing and publication of the Treaty, he was promoted to full Ambassadorial rank, a move which made many Austrians believe that there was growing understanding between their country and Germany.

Towards the end of July, with the Treaty not yet out of its swaddling clothes, a document of far-reaching importance came into the possession of the Federal Chancellor. When urged to act upon it and denounce the Treaty, he used words which implied that he would hang them (the Nazis) with their own rope; which showed a considerable amount of conceit in the Chancellor's character.

The document in question was a multigraphed circular issued by the council of the *Deutsche Studentenschaft* (Association of German Students) bearing date 15 July 1936. Commenting on the Treaty of friendship of 11 July, it ran:—

“ . . . *cuius regio, eius religio*, as was said once before in German history. And so it would appear on this occasion, but it is not so. In this last Treaty the Reich only recognizes facts as they are at the moment—a political necessity. France can no longer interfere so easily in such German matters as the *Anschluss*. The Austrian baiting of the Reich by the Press will be stopped, and this is very important. In domestic affairs Schuschnigg stands to-day in the position of Dr. Seipel. But the question of refugees and prisoners turns the conquest to a Pyrrhic victory. In any case the internal political fight will not always be directed against the Reich, and in spite of the interpretation of the new law for protection of the State, there still remains the Austrian National Socialist Party.

“So the battle goes on and on *Weltanschauung* lines. Once again the Austrians carry it on alone, willingly and uncomplainingly. The Reich is relieved of it. An independent National Socialist Austria is the approaching goal. The participation which Schuschnigg from now on gives to the National circles, is naturally not the main purpose of the long struggle. If the National Socialists have lost the first battle, partly fought with the wrong weapons, they must now ruthlessly commence the next. The aims of the fight are:

- a. Further enlightenment of the German people on the idea of a greater Germany.
- b. To win over the Austrian teaching profession to National Socialism and to an understanding of a Greater Germany. This only means the maintenance of the pre-war German outlook.
- c. Recruiting only amongst the youth (explanation and training).
- d. No propaganda as hitherto understood, but training on the *Weltanschauung* basis:

1. Theatre, Cinema, Radio, Press (general German event and Culture).
2. History (Pan-Germanism).
3. Economics (closest connection with the Reich).
4. Foreign travel (education of the travelling public).
5. Struggle against the Jews: struggle against political Catholicism in every form.

"A great part of the work under point five must be carried out in the Reich, and storm troops in the Austrian Universities must prepare the way for disseminating it through the people. Hitler showed us this new way, which leads from the poisoned atmosphere of the daily fight for jobs and bread to the final contest for the *Weltanschauung*.

"It must not be assumed that political Catholicism in Austria is quiescent and has given up the position it hitherto held. But it is not in the better social circles that its fighting power is increasing. Therefore, the fight must not be waged around influential posts but around positions which are near to youth. The greatest adversary remains—Janus-headed Rome. . . ."

The school-boy learns *ab uno disce omnes*, and surely Schuschnigg, good Latin scholar that he was, had not forgotten it. Surely the sight of this document was sufficient indication to anyone that the Third Reich was about to ingurgitate Austria.

First he desired wholesale collaboration with the Reich, almost voluptuously throwing himself into Hitler's arms, and then he drew back, and sought to remain the cool, yet tempting lover. He saw from the evidence of this and other printed matter, that a cultural penetration of Austria was planned and he searched for means to oppose it.

Schmidt and von Papen had both suggested to him that he should make the other forces in the State share the responsibility of fulfilling Austria's part of the Treaty, and as a result, a movement gained strength which had for its aim the founding of a "German People's Social League", which would embrace all ultra-Nationalists, and therefore the sympathizers with National Socialism.

Now for some reason best known to himself, while he was prepared to stand as a vassal to the Reich, Schuschnigg had an abhorrence of the Austrian Nazis. To recognize



a German Nazi as liege lord and frown upon an Austrian Nazi as a collaborator or even subordinate, is difficult of comprehension. So Kurt von Schuschnigg set his face against fulfilling a promise contained in Article 9, clause 10, of the Treaty of 11 July 1936, known as the "Gentleman's Agreement" (the English words "Gentleman's Agreement" appear in the original document, thus achieving marked prominence among the German script), "the drawing in of representatives of the hitherto so-called 'National Opposition in Austria' to collaborate in political responsibility".

For weeks the Federal Chancellor dallied with the idea, but finally rejected it, after further evidence came to hand that many Austrians, who sponsored this so-called People's League, were hand in glove with the gentlemen over the border. From this stage he began to take fright, for he appeared to see the quagmire of deceit and aggressive actions into which his colossal conceit had led him. He prohibited the formation of the League and looked around for allies who would help him oppose the elements to be found in its sponsors.

He found the "Leopold Group". It is not quite true to say that he found it—it was suggested to him by his "advisers", and Schuschnigg's ultimate downfall was carried yet a step further, for the members of this group were the very last people to whom he should have turned for help and guidance.

The Christian Chancellor nursed to his bosom a group of men, many of whom had only recently been amnestied, who had participated in the murder of Dollfuss, whose spirit, so the Chancellor protested, was his guide in the direction of Austrian policy.

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The Leopold Group had actually been organized in the concentration camp at Wöllersdorf (yes, Catholic Austria, too, had her concentration camps), to which, among others, three men had been consigned after the July Putsch of 1934. They were Captain Leopold, Dr. Jury and Dr. Tavs, and while in enforced idleness, they had conceived a plan

to form a new illegal party whose membership would include the intelligentsia and people with well-known names, none of whom had yet come under the notice of the authorities.

Captain Leopold was liberated in the spring of 1936 and Jury and Tavs were beneficiaries of the July amnesty of the same year. Leopold was the lowest socially in this self-appointed junta of liberators. Born at Krems, he was by profession an engineer and had been an N.C.O. in the Imperial Army. After the war he failed the examination for a commission and the Social Democratic Minister of War, Julius Deutsch, as a mark of recognition of his war and subsequent peace-time service and good conduct, granted him the honorary rank of captain in the army of the Austrian Republic. Lack of promotion, fanned by disillusionment and a class inferiority complex, drove him, like many others, into the ranks of the N.S.D.A.P. and in 1925 he was reprimanded and dismissed the army. The National Socialist Party, wishing to recompense him, appointed him to the council of the Party. Dr. Jury was a stalwart of National Socialism, having founded the first Austrian cell many years ago with Rentmeister, who had fled to Germany. He was a doctor of medicine and had been a Christian Socialist Councillor for St. Polten, his hometown in Southern Austria. Jury was one of the few men in Austria who were honest in their belief that National Socialism would benefit the country.

Dr. Tavs, like the other two conspirators, had become a Nazi very early. Born in Sudetenland, he became a chemist and joined the staff of the Austrian Patent Office after the war. It is very interesting here to note that Tavs was a close friend of Konrad Henlein, President of the Sudeten National Socialist Party, and a liaison existed between the two men, which afterwards became a "shuttle service" for messages and men between Austria, Germany and Czechoslovakia.

Many illustrious Austrians were enraptured by their scheme and hastened to join the new movement, whose council became known as the "Committee of Seven", and it is here that von Papen employed the same method

as covered his tracks in war-time America. The famous "Committee of Seven" had a Papen watchdog in the form of Herr In der Mauer, the Vienna correspondent of the former Centre organ *Germania*, of which, it will be remembered, von Papen was chairman of directors. Papen was still actuated by the old Imperial order, "every means to protect Germany's interest", and he used a Catholic newspaper, financed by Catholic money, to help in the achievement of a National Socialist aim. The name of von Papen's nominee in the "Committee of Seven" is very appropriate, for rendered into English it means, "in the wall".

The other six members of this infamous committee were Leopold, Jury and Tavs, Globotschnig, the Vienna district leader of the Nazis, Professor Menghin, one-time Rector of the University of Vienna, whose chair was the study of prehistoric man (he was also one of Papen's Catholic "bridge builders"), and a man who went by the peculiar title of Lieutenant Field-Marshal von Bardolff.

The organization of this movement took up most of the winter months, but in February 1937 the Federal Chancellor was persuaded by one of his Ministers, Dr. Neustädter-Stürmer, to discuss the future with several of its representatives.

On 12 February 1937 a number of men met in the Chancellor's room with very mixed feelings. Schuschnigg, Neustädter-Stürmer, Skubl, the Vienna Police President, and his two aides, Stürminger and Bartl, seemed to represent the Government, while Jury and Menghin took the floor for the new ally, the Committee of Seven. Leopold, owing to his lack of aristocratic background, remained in the waiting-room and was called into the conference-room after the plans were all laid, in order that he could promise the Chancellor his good behaviour; while for some unknown, but typical Austrian reason, Dr. Seyss-Inquart was brought in, probably to make an impressive show of force behind the Government. A year later, a show of force was to be used against the Federal Chancellor in the house on the hill across the frontier.

Captain Leopold solemnly declared to Schuschnigg: "I declare that on political grounds we recognize the independence of Austria and take this as our basis. This declaration also applies to the Constitution of 1934 and to the law regarding the Fatherland Front, outside which we will form no party."

Which, paraphrased, means: "I will make no Putsch"—words which seemed vaguely familiar, from Munich days in 1923 to Berlin days of 1932. There was the Nazi credo: "Agreements are subject to the law of development."

After that fateful meeting, at which Schuschnigg deliberately agreed to the Committee of Seven becoming virtually a State within a State, and as he thought a bludgeon against the parties for his own private use, the movement blossomed out officially and opened offices in the heart of Vienna, in the Vienna Brown House in the Teinfalt Strasse. The grand council of the committee occupied the third floor, while the Vienna district committee conducted its business from the more important first floor.

Schuschnigg was apparently blind to the fact that all callers at this office were received by orderlies in the brown uniform of the Nazi storm troops.

The organizations controlled by this "Committee of Seven" were varied and numerous and its mandate to terrorize the civil population came from none other than the Federal Chancellor himself, for at that meeting in the *Bundeskanzleramt* in February, he had definitely agreed to many things, the most important of which were:—

a. He asked them not to insist upon the formation of the German Social People's League and to refrain from raising such an issue again for some time, contenting themselves meanwhile with the work of their own organization, the Committee of Seven, which he recognized *de facto* and with which he desired to keep in touch. He encouraged them to found provincial committees.

b. He agreed to see that reporters and special agents would be appointed in the Vienna and provincial branches of the Fatherland Front, with instructions to them to maintain liaison on all National questions, to facilitate the work of the ultra-Nationals within the Fatherland Front, and he promised his personal intervention in all cases of difficulty.

c. He agreed to a reform of the laws governing the security of the State.

d. He agreed to a continuance of the amnesty arrangements, thereby providing for the release of 145 Nazis still in prison. Proceedings were to be stopped, sentences modified and the régime of discrimination against Nazis and ultra-Nationals was to be abandoned.

e. He promised a friendly examination of the cases of all officials who had been dismissed on account of their Nazi activities.

f. Students of Austrian High Schools who had been expelled for their political activities, were to be reinstated.

g. The Chancellor agreed to the gradual elimination from executive positions of all officials who were considered objectionable to the ultra-National and Nazi circles.

Thus, in one day's discussion the illegal party had become, if one may call it such, the National Opposition. The Trojan horse, envisaged by von Papen, was in the stable.

The National Socialist executive committee had headquarters in a laundry in the Helfferstorfer Strasse and von Papen went down in the social scale. In his Military Attaché days in America he had at least enjoyed the dignity of a Merchant-Banking house of repute for his extra-diplomatic activities, but here in Vienna he had gone into the laundry business, clean enough in all conscience, but not so refined.

This laundry had several things lying about the place, which marked it out as being something superior to the ordinary laundry. It had a printing press, and this press turned out not labels and bill-heads as one might expect, but a variety of sheets ranging from the *Osterreichische Beobachter*, the Austrian edition of the famous Nazi daily *Völkischer Beobachter*, to the propaganda throwaways and confetti-like swastikas which filled Vienna's streets at night. Here, in this laundry, was concealed the whole illegal machinery of the Austrian Nazis.

To this homely meeting-place came von Stein, counsellor at the German Embassy in Vienna, Manlicher, a retired President of the Austrian Senate, In der Mauer, the

Catholic journalist, Wolpegger, the Nazi provincial leader, Major Jäger, a one-time Austrian army officer, who, through his organizing of the S.A. and S.S. in Austria, sought to become another Roehm; even the distinguished professor of prehistoric times, Menghin, deigned to cross the threshold of a place which most certainly found no equivalent in his lecture notes, while the three men who were going to help Schuschnigg rule Austria, Leopold, Tavs and Jury, were very important visitors indeed.

On 24 May 1937 the laundry in the Helfferstorfer Strasse was raided by the Austrian political police and the incriminating evidence found there was taken to the Chancellor by the Police President Skubl in person.

The Chancellor sighed, for he hated interruptions. He was just then thinking over the possibility of a Franco-British intervention in the matter of Austria versus the German Reich. He had gained time by the Treaty and he had been advised by influential but unofficial sources in Paris and London that such intervention was not impossible. The unofficial Paris-London axis thought that it could be arranged. This Hitler fellow was getting too big for his boots. Of course they knew with what the Herr Chancellor had to contend and winter sports in Austria would not be half so pleasant with these Nazi people hanging about. No. The Chancellor must let them know when things were liable to get beyond his control.

With that legendary indifference with which his publicists had clothed him, he took the evidence from Skubl and placed it in a drawer in his desk, with another dossier marked "Woitsche".<sup>1</sup> He had had several difficult encounters with Herr von Papen of late; the next time matters proved difficult, he would nonchalantly open that drawer and throwing the papers on the desk, he would exclaim: "Now! Herr von Papen, what about these out-

<sup>1</sup> On 27 October 1936 the police had arrested a Nazi, an engineer named Woitsche, who had returned from South America, so it was said, with plans to murder the Chancellor. The Austrian Government claimed that it had traced Woitsche's association with the Reichs Propaganda Ministry, the Braunhaus in Munich and the German Institute for the Study of Foreign Politics in Stuttgart. Nothing was done to face the German Government with the accusation, which, if the attempted assassination had substance in fact, would have been the obvious course.

rages, perpetrated under cover of the Treaty? Don't talk to me of Austrian non-observance." That would make the elegant nobleman sit up.

In the summer and winter of 1937, evidence in plenty was forthcoming to prove that the Reich had not deserted the Austrian National Socialists. All around the Austro-German frontier couriers were being seized and cars loaded with propaganda printed in Germany were caught entering Austria.

By now the Austrian Chancellor was more than ever convinced of his mistake in believing that the great German Reich could be subordinated to the rôle of handmaiden to aristocratic Austria, but his pride prevented him openly to admit it, hence the bulk of the cases of Nazi infiltration and, in some instances, terrorism, were hushed up.

After the raid, the propaganda office conducted from the laundry was removed to the official offices of the Committee of Seven in the Teinfalt Strasse, and more and more Nationalist personalities frequented it. Just as the National Socialist movement had absorbed the Centre, Nationalists, and various Right parties in the Germany of 1933, so the illegal Nazi organization in Austria was attracting to itself all the forces of reaction, not excluding the so-called Christian Trade Union leaders.

Everything in the Austria of 1937 was in a state of flux, with von Papen behind the scenes wielding the soldering iron and heating the disaffected elements over the flames of a glowing Austria. Hypocrisy has sometimes been defined as the tribute which sin pays to morality. So Herr von Papen became a patron of the German Club in the Trattenhof, not far from the Teinfalt Strasse, and he found its atmosphere some consolation for the lack of his beloved *Herrenklub*.

He could talk with its President, Lieutenant Field-Marshal von Bardolff, its vice-president, Dr. Seyss-Inquart, and General Kraus, a general who was in constant communication with Hitler and Göring, and who had promised both that the Austrian Army would not oppose an invasion of Austria by German armed forces, while the diplomatic atmosphere was retained by an occasional drink with von

Stein, his counsellor of Embassy. The more "gentlemanly" members of the Committee of Seven were also members, but poor Leopold was excluded, for accident of birth plays funny tricks. Through it one may suffer death or imprisonment for a common aim, yet the sacred atmosphere of a useless clique of noblemen is verboten. Even in Vienna, the threadbare Vienna of 1937, the aristocratic principle was maintained inviolate.

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To finance the activities of National Socialism in Austria it was obviously quite necessary to find money from many sources. Where did it all come from? Dr. Neubacher, who became Lord Mayor of Vienna after the *Anschluss*, and who was in London in the spring of 1939 vainly endeavouring to raise a loan in the City, is best qualified to answer.

Dr. Neubacher, like many other industrialists turned office-bearer in the Third Reich, was not always a Nazi. Before the advent of National Socialism in Germany he was the managing director of an Austrian public utility housing corporation. He was also the president for Austria of the "German-Austrian People's Union", and his German opposite number was none other than Paul Loebe, Social Democratic president of the Reichstag before von Papen's Chancellorship in 1932. In July 1934 he joined the National Socialist Party and a little later he was thrown into the Wöllersdorf concentration camp for his illegal activities. After a while he was released and became a director of the German Aniline Dye and Chemical Works, more popularly known as Detag (*Deutsche Tierfarben und Chemikalien Handels A. G.*), which was an Austrian affiliated company of the German Dye Trust (*I. G. Farben Industrie*).

From Detag's office in the Schottenring, the erstwhile Social Democrat now turned National Socialist, distributed the funds necessary to bring the von Papen policy to fulfilment.

The German book and film trade swept over Austria and German cultural aims became predominant. German musicians and artists flocked to Vienna and wide-spread arrange-



ments were made for lectures by prominent Germans on German science, literature, art and history. Everywhere the swastika was to be seen, displayed on motor car bonnets, coat lapel and house front.

To counteract this infiltration of Nazi ideas and Nazi culture and to minimize the effect of various terrorist activities in the minds of the Austrian folk, Schuschnigg took on a mask of serenity and self-control, while his patriotic speeches were intended to convey the certainty of political aim. Like many men who lack the quality of leadership, the Federal Chancellor, in those days of bloodless warfare with the Reich (despite the Treaty), gave the impression of boundless energy and indifference to threats, while in fact he felt quite opposite.

When asked by a supporter at a public meeting in Graz for an explanation of his policy, in the face of the known Nazi aggression from such organizations as the Committee of Seven, and when faced with a definite statement from the same supporter that to him the Chancellor appeared like Siegfried about to be struck down by the treacherous Hagen's spear, Schuschnigg answered with a soft voice and a knowing smile: "Yes! I am quite aware of their little game and also of the traitors around me, but between Siegfried of saga and myself there is a difference; I know how little I can depend upon certain gentlemen and I know the traitor Hagen." Thereafter the idea got about that in Schuschnigg, Austria had a wily politician to lead it, who knew what he was about, and so on. The anti-Nazi section of Austria thought that he was going to prove as capable at splitting the Nazis, at home and in Germany, as he had been in disintegrating the *Heimwehr* leadership and were prepared to suffer a little further the irritant of National discord until the end could be achieved.

Periodically Franz von Papen would call upon the Federal Chancellor and by innuendo would lead him to believe that all was not well in the Reich. Dr. Schacht was not in agreement with Hitler in Reichsbank policy, and Göring was not the man to run the Four-Year Plan, while his friends in the army had definitely told him that they would not tolerate much more interference with their plans.

On another occasion von Papen would suggest that much of the trouble in Austria was caused by irresponsible elements: "Why, look at that Helfferstorfer Strasse affair—trivial enough," said von Papen, "but as you know, Herr Bundeskanzler, it will pay us both, who are so devoted to the interests of Austro-German friendship and fulfilment of the Treaty, to forget it."

And so the Federal Chancellor lost his opportunity of confronting the German Ambassador with the dossier from the drawer of his desk. Disappointing, but he could wait, for already he thought that he could see the Third Reich breaking up, what with von Papen's insinuations and his own agent's reports from Berlin about the various factions which seemed to be constantly warring with each other around the policy of the Führer.

Schuschnigg, by appearing to agree to von Papen's plan of reconciliation, had gained time, as he thought, and he had avoided invasion. He was altering his policy bit by bit; to-day the North Germans did not seem quite so desirable as they did in July of 1936, yet in his desperation he was convinced that the Treaty must be rigidly adhered to, and therefore all the pin pricks of the illegal parties must be borne, to gain further time until the European situation generally became less tense and when Germany, internally, had settled down to what he felt sure would be a less totalitarian State. Then, and then only, he had by now become convinced, Austria would march side by side with the Reich with himself as the head of a tranquil second German State.

So he played for months with many different Ministers, mostly National Socialists, and the ground trembled beneath his feet. Rome thundered at him and Berlin roared, and he precariously continued his rule by the not very permanent policy of dividing those around him.

Since the operation of the Treaty, the German Embassy in Vienna laboured under the diplomatic delusion that the right had been given to it to intervene in the supervision of Austrian life. Every little criticism of Germany in the Austrian Press brought von Papen running to the *Ballhausplatz*, to see either Schuschnigg or Schmidt, or Herr

von Hagen, the German Press Attaché, would call upon the head of the official Press service. If satisfaction was a day belated the whole German Press bellowed its fury to the world.

Despite all this von Papen nevertheless conducted himself with an outward show of diplomatic rectitude—his complaints were always made in language to which no one could take offence, but his consular staff in the provinces sorely tried his patience—for here the little Hitlers were showing themselves, as they had done in the Reich in 1933-4, and they had to be told by von Papen, as well as by the Austrian Government, that international custom had placed a great gulf twixt diplomatic and consular duties.

By the end of 1937 von Papen, aided by several industrious Press-clipping attachés, had collected a list of more than three hundred "offences" committed by Austria against the Treaty, and thus armed, he was able to extort further concessions from the Chancellor. This or that official was anti-German and in the interest of the Treaty, should be dismissed.

It had now become a regular thing for the German Ambassador to demand from Schuschnigg the dismissal of one or another high servant of the State, on the grounds that his continual presence in a particular Ministry was an affront to the Reich. For over a year Herr von Papen had been insistent that Herr Hornbostel, the chief of the political department of the Austrian Foreign office, and Herr Ludwig, the official Press chief, had both been far too active against the Reich before the Treaty of Friendship to be true interpreters of present conditions. Hornbostel remained because he was essential to Schmidt, the new Foreign Secretary (who was working in double harness with Papen), but Ludwig was "promoted" to the innocuous post of organizer of the newly-formed Press Chamber, and on von Papen's suggestion, the then Austrian Ambassador in Warsaw, Hoffinger, was recalled and installed in the *Ballhausplatz*, presumably to direct the interpretations of all Austro-German questions. That was how Austria, "in conformity with the declarations of the Führer and by the

Federal Chancellor . . .”, retained “its full sovereignty and the right to order its own affairs”.

The Catholic papers in Austria such as the *Brückenbauer* (Bridge-builder), *Der Christliche Stände-staat* (The Christian State of all classes) and the Rome correspondent of the *Reichspost* became rabidly pro-Nazi and the Vatican issued several warnings at this condoning, as it put it, of German persecution of the Church.

Over the border the German newspapers attacked leading Austrian politicians and everything in Austrian life which appeared to be in opposition to German penetration. Among all leading Austrians at that time, only Foreign Minister Guido Schmidt enjoyed the fulsome limelight of the German Press, being warmly applauded for his “understanding” of the German case.

Gradually the key positions of the Government were filled by men such as Schmidt, Glaise-Horstenau (Home Office) and Neustädter-Stürmer (Public Security), all of whom now depended upon the goodwill of Herrn von Papen.

Threads led from the German Embassy, through the Teinfaltstrasse, to the Ministeries, and despite Schuschnigg’s constant challenge that Austria would remain independent, the subordination of the official will to the German Reich went on. To all intents and purposes Austria had become a Colony of the Reich. Everywhere National Socialists sat in Government offices, but they were Austrians and not Germans, as so many reports have had it.

Schuschnigg felt that the Treaty of Friendship was proving unworkable and suggested to Herrn von Papen that the pact should be varied whereby the Reich would undertake to exercise more control over its newspapers. The official answer was conciliatory, but the real answer came at Wels in Upper Austria at a demonstration of ex-service men, the outcome of which embarrassed Schuschnigg’s administration still further, for the German Ambassador had been present and he had made an impassioned speech on Austro-German unity, from which it seemed that all Austrian ex-service men were Nazis. The scene at Wels was terrific, and for a moment one could have imagined that one was in Germany. The sequel to this Wels demon-

stration came quickly. The various sports associations, disguising groups of National Socialists, were disbanded by order of the Government.

This action precipitated open conflict between the forces of reaction and Schuschnigg's own faction, by now shrinking in numerical strength day by day, so he conceived a plan to embrace Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Austria, in what would have become a united front of independence against the Reich. The Czechoslovaks were very keen because they had been playing with a very similar idea with Mussolini, and the Hungarian Government approved the idea, to such an extent, indeed, that it sent very tangible evidence of German breach of the Austro-German Treaty to the Federal Chancellor for "his attention and action".

Thus emboldened, Schuschnigg refused to join with the Reich in an economic agreement on a barter basis, when the suggestion was put to him by Schacht, then President of the Reichsbank, when on one of his exploratory tours of Central Europe and the Balkans. Had Austria complied with the Reichsbank's chief's suggestion, the German Four-Year Plan would have been materially strengthened by Austria's timber and minerals, but this "insult" by the Austrians changed Field-Marshal Göring, the Commissioner of the Plan, from a Bismarck disciple to a ruthless advocate of *Anschluss*. Soon afterwards Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Guido Schmidt visited Göring at Schorfheide, and he being young was attracted to several ideas put forward by the Field-Marshal, the most important among which being the complete economic and military co-operation of Austria with the Reich. The outcry in Vienna over Schmidt's visit was enormous. It was known that Herr von Papen had suggested that Schmidt should visit Göring and Schuschnigg's friends urged him to dispense with Schmidt. Surely, they said, one can see with only half an eye that he is neither loyal to you, his friend and Chancellor, nor to Austria, his country. Above all they were suspicious of his association with Herrn von Papen.

The Federal Chancellor's answer was correct enough: "Guido Schmidt is my friend and my Foreign Minister, and Herr von Papen is a distinguished German accredited

to me as the Ambassador of the Reich. The work, indeed the duties of these two men throw them together—therefore what is there unnatural in a close understanding? Besides, I must have a scapegoat and Schmidt is willing, as my friend, to be that. I cannot carry through the policy of Germanizing Austria—if it failed I could no longer remain in office and my plans for turning to other Powers for protection would be rendered futile. No. Schmidt is the Austrian specialist on fulfilment of the Treaty of July and he must remain. If everything works out well, he will share my laurels; if the Treaty is wrecked he will go into the wilderness. He knows this and I am deeply conscious of his willingness to sacrifice his career for Austria and for me.”

But Guido Schmidt did not intend to become a scapegoat. He intended to become Chancellor of an Austria vassal to the Reich. The Reich knew that there would be no vacancy, but thought it not its business to shake the charming young diplomat out of his cherished daydream. Like a will-o'-the-wisp, von Papen led him on with glowing accounts of the future. Schuschnigg thought of him as a scapegoat—others used him as a catspaw, although he himself saw his future standing as a combination of the Hitler, Goebbels and Göring of Austria, or a modern Metternich, holding the balance of Europe.

Blunder after blunder was perpetrated by Schuschnigg and von Papen told him that the Reich Government could not tolerate the position of a large body of disgruntled people on its frontier. The internal strife in Austria was a menace to German peace. Would the Federal Chancellor bring it to an end or must Hitler? That was the threat of invasion, and the Federal Chancellor had been reading, “the Führer expects National Socialism in Austria to attain of its own volition, the unalterable goal he has set before it—liberation and *Anschluss*”, in a December issue of *Aufbruch*, the illegal organ of the Austrian Nazis, just at the time von Papen had called.

Invasion, thought Schuschnigg, well, that's different. My help is to hand without treaties and negotiations. France and Britain will veto that move on Hitler's part.

Some months before, von Papen had discreetly told him that the economic situation in Germany was bad, and had handed him at the same time a very confidential memorandum drawn up by the Rhenish Westphalian Heavy Industries, which confirmed the doleful story the German Ambassador had told. There was Schuschnigg's opportunity, continued von Papen—a closer economic bond with the Reich. No! Schacht had tried that dodge, mused the Chancellor, but nevertheless he continued to worry over into the turn of the year 1937-38, about the Putsch and ultimate invasion which he felt must come. He was beginning to see that he had overplayed his hand. Too late, he saw the hostile forces in his Government. He was trapped into accepting almost any situation as it arose.

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While Schuschnigg had learned from Germany that von Neurath was counselling caution in the Austrian matter, Hitler had received word from his Ambassador in Vienna that the Austrian Army would not resist an invasion by German troops. Neurath was urging upon his Government that close military, economic and political co-operation with Austria was infinitely preferable to a compulsory *Anschluss*, for which Germany would receive the censure of those Powers opposed to her totalitarianism.

Meanwhile, Herr Hitler was locked away in his mountain home, carefully inspecting his growing collection of picture postcards of views of Vienna and the leading towns of Austria, devoting many hours of thought to arriving at a decision as to which sites would prove the best future headquarters of the Nazi movement in his native country. He had planned to liberate Austria on 30 January 1938, the fifth anniversary of the Nazi rise to power; but the plan was upset by an Austrian police raid.

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While Schuschnigg had been endeavouring to lead Czechoslovakia and Hungary into a united front, led by Austria, against Germany, certain German and Hungarian elements were working for a German, Hungarian, Austrian

*bloc*, whose object would be the destruction and partition of Czechoslovakia.

Von Papen, mainly through Schmidt, had won over every influential person in the Austrian ultra-Nationalist clique to this scheme and it soon became known in informal circles that the Roman Caesar had given it his blessing while the little Entente had diplomatically intimated that it would not obstruct a German attack on Czechoslovakia.

Schuschnigg's reluctance to commit Austria to such a plan hastened his downfall and the *Anschluss* was only a few weeks distant, for at last, in the face of this final rebuff Hitler had made up his mind to destroy Schuschnigg and to solve the Austrian question in his own way. The Great War had seemingly ended the inexorable fate that had bound Prague to Vienna under the Dual Monarchy, yet resurgent Prussian policy, made possible in 1932 by von Papen and continued by him down till 1938, linked these two cities closer in their ultimate destruction as independent centres of individual culture.

Many have wondered at Schuschnigg's apparent mistrust of France and why he did not seek the protection of that country, Catholic as it was, at the moment when he began to see that all attempts at fulfilment of the Treaty with Hitler were bound to prove futile. Perhaps Franz von Papen can best answer that. Perhaps the Catholic bond between the German Ambassador and the Federal Chancellor made Schuschnigg exclaim, more than once, "Leon Blum is certainly not a possible or desirable ally for Catholic Austria!" The popular front in France had disgusted both Papen and the Chancellor, and von Papen's many French interests and visits to the French Capital, brought fresh stories to Vienna of French impotence and decadence.

Guido Schmidt, of whom the Chancellor said so often, "he has my confidence" and who everybody else knew was von Papen's confidant, strongly advised official French and English foreign policy against making a declaration of their joint protection of Austria. So the thread had gone from conspirator to dupe.



Early in January 1938, Franz von Papen received news from a disgruntled, but politically-minded General of the Reichswehr, that his life was in danger; at least, the General was not quite sure if von Papen would be the target, or whether it would be General Muff, the German Military Attaché in Vienna. The communication went on to say that this alleged imminent attempt at the assassination of a German diplomat (presumably by a Schuschnigg supporter) would be followed by a Putsch, and subsequently Germany would send troops into Austria to restore order.

Von Papen smiled. He knew of the plans for the Putsch, but surely not again the attempt on his life.

Coincident with this information, the Federal Chancellor received reliable reports relating to the massing of German troops, the strengthening of the Alpine command and the removal of the Austrian Legion from their Northern camps to the Bavarian Tyrol. A further report, from von Papen's own circle in Berlin, confirmed the plan to attempt the German Ambassador's life. Another report brought news of the points of massing, the strength of the units, and the names of the Generals in command.

The proper mental atmosphere having been created over a number of years, the reports proved that at last the material preparations for the assault on Austria were finished. It was really Dr. Tavs who upset the original plan of Hitler's for 30 January, by boasting about it in a newspaper article circulating in the Balkan States, and on information from Yugoslavia, the Vienna police raided the office in the Teinfalt Strasse, where they found incriminating material similar to that found in the raid on the laundry in the Helferstorfer Strasse, together with a list of all the secret political leaders in Austria and confirmation, in writing, of the plot to murder von Papen. Dr. Tavs was arrested and Captain Leopold was detained, questioned and subsequently released.

Among the papers confiscated in the raid were several alternative plans for a Putsch and German military intervention, but the most important one was that which has now come to be known as the R.H. plan, because it was

signed with the initials of Rudolf Hess, the quiet, sphinx-like deputy of Adolf Hitler. Actually this plan had been known of for some while, because the German is famous for his loud secrets. The natural jealousies and the constant friction in any revolutionary movement always allow of whispers creeping around in the circles of the initiated. The raid on the Committee of Seven offices merely confirmed what von Papen and Schuschnigg had known for several days.

The plan in brief was to stage a riot before the door of the German Embassy at a moment when von Papen was either entering or leaving, and a trusted member of the S.S. Standarte 89, dressed in the uniform of the Iron Legion (*Eiserne Brigade*) would fire the shot which was to kill the Ambassador. The blame was to be fixed on a renegade Nazi, Walter Leubuscher, who had returned to Austria from Germany where he had served in the Austrian Legion. Naturally the murder would cause world attention and great indignation in the Reich, whose Government would be in the position of imposing crushing terms on Schuschnigg.

The plot was discovered, Hitler and Hess were discredited and von Papen, although in fear of his life, had to prevent the publication of the story.

He went to Schuschnigg in a state of real agitation and disclosed his information from Germany, but described the would-be assassin as a member of the Iron Legion. He demanded protection from the Austrian Government as the representative of the Reich. This is the only occasion in von Papen's political history in which he kept his head. With the knowledge that his life was seriously to be attempted, he turned the danger to the benefit of the German case. An Austrian had planned to murder him.

With their ears to the ground, the local Nazis played up to the Ambassador, for they knew that was the only way out temporarily. They denounced the renegade Leubuscher to the Vienna police, who arrested him on suspicion of preparing to make an attempt on the life of von Papen.

Because of this discovery, the Austrian Nazis refrained from staging the huge demonstration planned for the fifth

anniversary of Adolf Hitler's seizure of power, and the German Führer was not able to include in his speech to the Reichstag, the complaints against Austria that he had prepared. His guns were spiked, because although von Papen, shaken though he was, had pleaded with the Austrian Chancellor to keep the details of the raid on the Teinfalt Strasse and the conspiracy against his own life a State secret as a personal favour, in these days of double dealing a promise seemed not to have much value, and Herr Hitler promptly felt from personal experience that it was not safe to rely upon Schuschnigg's promise, which, however, and probably to his great surprise, was kept.

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The raid on the illegal party headquarters caused a lull in the Nazi activities in Austria for a while. Franz von Papen was relieved, but furious, for among the documents discovered was a list of orders from the Reich laying down instructions for the behaviour of Austrian National Socialists in the event of a German-Yugoslav invasion. This was too flagrant a breach of the Treaty and rendered von Papen's position almost untenable, so he wrote to his chief, von Neurath, and told him so.

In von Neurath, von Papen had a chief of the old diplomatic school. Among other things he had been German Ambassador in London and was alive to the international situation. He knew what Germany in time could achieve through penetration and he was not a "blood-and-soil man". Von Neurath would have done a great deal to alleviate von Papen's awkward situation in Vienna; he would doubtless have sent a Note dissociating the Ambassador from these rowdies of the Teinfalt Strasse, but at that particular moment the going was very difficult for him in the Wilhelm Strasse.

For days he had been putting forward reasons why an attempt at invasion of Austria should not be made; when he had exhausted his purely political arguments, the big guns of the Army took over and explained to Herr Hitler the military obstacles and international implications involved in such a daring attempt. Nevertheless, the Führer's mind

was made up and von Neurath left the Foreign Office to become President of a newly constituted Privy Cabinet Council, while von Blomberg, the War Minister, was dethroned and General von Fritsch, probably Germany's most brilliant soldier, was dismissed from the post of Commander-in-Chief of the German Army, Hitler taking over that position in person. Franz von Papen was recalled to Berlin on 4 February to report orally on the situation in Austria. On 6 February, in response to a telegram received as he was crossing the Austrian frontier and which caused him to alter his destination, he was in conference with Hitler at Berchtesgaden, and between these two, the Westphalian nobleman and the one time corporal of the Bavarian Army, a new plan was evolved speedily to dispose of the Austrian situation—and the stage was set to receive the Federal Chancellor of Austria, Kurt von Schuschnigg, on their own hearth. The modern equivalent of a petty king going to pay homage to the Emperor.

The sudden departure of von Papen from Vienna, a few days before, had been thought by many to mean that he had fallen a victim to the February purge of diplomats and generals, on that famous occasion when Herr Hitler merged the control of Army, Party and State into his own two hands, thus doing away with all opposition to his plans for Austria; but he made a surprise return to the Austrian capital late on 7 February on special mission, and called upon Foreign Minister Guido Schmidt.

Schmidt found a changed Papen, a nervous, irritable man, who forcibly challenged him with Austria's betrayal of the Treaty and assured him in a very truculent fashion, so unlike the real Papen, that unless the Government mended its ways and followed German foreign policy more closely, as was laid down in the July Treaty (remember, Schuschnigg had refused to have anything to do with the plan for the annihilation and partition of Czechoslovakia), the Reich was determined to adopt the appropriate attitude warranted by Austria's non-compliance. The German Ambassador gave the Austrian Foreign Secretary clearly to understand that the Reich left itself free to follow a

policy which safeguarded its interests and those of its fellow Germans in Austria.

After having satisfied himself that von Papen's new attitude was not just a practical joke on the Austrian situation, for much of their past discussion had been along such lines, Schmidt took his stand, declaring that Austria had more than adhered to the Treaty and he assured the Germany envoy that Austria was not in a position to give further guarantees of Policy. Dr. Schmidt continued: "but if you charge my Government with a lack of observance of the spirit of the Treaty, Herr von Papen, you must at least admit that I have been loyal to the Treaty." There was von Papen's opening—the vanity of this young man, and at the same time he could finish this business of Austria, for he had no desire to sit through another session like yesterday's with Herr Hitler, whose tirades had worn his nerves down to such a breaking point, accounting for the irritable manner with which he had presented his demands to the Austrian Foreign Secretary. "Then help me to arrange a meeting between the Federal Chancellor and the Führer, at which a new understanding can be discussed," said von Papen, and as an afterthought, "and persuade him not to use the Teinfaltstrasse documents in any way which will annoy the Führer or upset Germany." Von Papen was very worried about these documents and everything depended upon their suppression.

On the following morning the Federal Chancellor received the German envoy, who was accompanied by the Austrian Foreign Secretary—a bit strange, thought Schuschnigg, but still as Papen was now on special mission again, it was quite in keeping with the niceties of diplomatic intercourse. After a brief preamble, von Papen presented an invitation from Hitler to the Federal Chancellor to visit him at Berchtesgaden to talk things over as one head of State to another. Schuschnigg hesitated, but his "friend" and Foreign Minister urged his acceptance of the invitation because it offered a splendid opportunity for the heads of the two German States to come face to face and to talk on equal footing.

With all due respect to Herr von Papen, insinuated Schmidt, Notes through Embassies are very impersonal and are liable to take on the character of the head of mission rather than of the Government from whom they are despatched. And so Schmidt won, as he did on every occasion when Schuschnigg was faced with a decision on difficult political points.

But Schuschnigg's intention to meet Hitler was not without guile. He knew that the Reichstag meeting, adjourned from 30 January to 20 February, because of the raid on the Teinfaltstrasse and the cleaning up to be done among the German non-Nazi generals and diplomats, had to be told something about Austria—the German Ambassador had told him that much when persuading him of the goodwill a meeting with Hitler would bring about. Now, thought Schuschnigg, Hitler was weakened by his long struggle with the Army and the suppression by the Austrian Government of the Teinfaltstrasse documents placed the Führer under an obligation to him, which he was bound to admit and deal reasonably accordingly.

If, arising out of his meeting with Hitler, and assuming that a new start could be made on a permanent basis, Hitler made favourable remarks about Austria and mentioned Austria's independence in his coming speech to the Reichstag, then any further attempt by the Reich to dictate to Austria would be condemned by the world as a personal breach by Hitler. A significant fact emerges from an inspection of Austro-German affairs. Adolf Hitler, as the head of the Reich, had never given personal recognition to the Treaty of July 1936; the pact had been made on Germany's behalf by the Foreign Office, through Herr von Papen, and its official announcement to the German people was made by Dr. Goebbels, the German propaganda Minister, over the Reichs radio network on the eve of it coming into operation.

So Schuschnigg, accompanied by Schmidt and von Papen, set off to meet Hitler at Berchtesgaden with the documents of the Teinfaltstrasse and the Woitsche cases in his despatch-case. If Hitler started any of his usual public address business with him, he would coolly draw

the R.H. plan out of his case and confront him with it. But the Federal Chancellor's dreams were soon to be shattered.

There is no need to recount the shameful scene at the meeting between the "two heads of Sovereign States", dignified by the name of a conference. After two or three hours of intimidation by a tremendous show of force and a disgusting exhibition of bad manners from the head of the German Reich, the Federal Chancellor left the Hitler villa a broken and defeated man, for he had been given two days in which to agree to the following demands:—

- a.* Amnesty for all Nazi prisoners and the Nazi Legion (members of Nazi and other illegal bodies, who had fled to the Reich and who had been incorporated in a strong militarily trained force).
- b.* Full political freedom for the Austrian National Socialist Party.
- c.* The "strengthening" of the Austrian Government by the admission of Dr. Seyss-Inquart, as the Minister of Public Security and a Nazi to be appointed as the Austrian Minister of Justice.
- d.* The removal of Jansa, the Austrian chief of staff of the Army.
- e.* The appointment of a certain Ministerial Councillor Wolf as chief of the Austrian Press Service.

In return for the acceptance of these demands and their immediate translation into Austrian laws, the Reich promised a renewed declaration that it recognized the Treaty of Friendship of July 1936, the abandoning of all illegal National Socialist organisations within Austria (it will be noticed that *b* above was intended to legalize National Socialism in Austria, so this did not engage the Reich in giving anything away); furthermore the Reich was prepared to relieve Schuschnigg of the custody of the conspirators, Leopold and Tavs, by receiving them into Germany, which undertaking shrieked complicity and allowed of no denial.

Back in Vienna Schuschnigg locked himself away from his Ministers for a whole day, in which time he was able to view the ghastly business in its true perspective. Papen had trapped him into going to Berchtesgaden—with his lies he had lulled his early fears that mischief was brewing over the border.

Yes, pondered Schuschnigg, von Papen had been definite on the point that the meeting was to take place on the tacit understanding that the sovereignty of Austria would on no account be brought into discussion. Herr Hitler naturally understood that by virtue of the Treaty. What else had Papen said? “. . . a friendly informal meeting, intended to clear away the misunderstanding that had become so awkward to all over the July Treaty and to provide mutually agreed upon plans for the pacification of Austria.” He pulled an English newspaper towards him across his desk and found that it spoke of a “victory for Schuschnigg”—and it was all his own fault, he thought, as he threw it away in impotent rage and hopelessness, for had he not himself, confident of success, with his sword of Damocles (as he had fondly imagined the Teinfaltstrasse documents to be) held over the head of Hitler, issued reassuring notices to the Austrian Embassies abroad.

The next day he saw Miklas, the Federal President, and they both agreed to resign. On the following day, Tuesday, however, conversations were carried on with the German Embassy and by six o'clock in the evening, the time limit of Hitler's ultimatum, the Austrian Government accepted the conditions and during the next few days proceeded to fulfil them.

Yet still the deceit and hypocrisy went on; the Prime Minister of England was made an innocent party to the Schuschnigg policy of lies and deceit, when on information supplied by the Austrian Ambassador in London, based on misleading instructions from Vienna, which Baron Frankenstein could question but not disobey, he stated in the House of Commons that Austria herself denied that Hitler had confronted her with an ultimatum, and that she was putting into operation a new accord, freely entered into by her with her larger neighbour.

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Everywhere in Austria Schuschnigg's new colleagues, or masters, gave Nazi-ism full rein and the swastika swamped the country. Seyss-Inquart, the vice-president of the German Club, became both Home secretary and Minister



of Public Security. Von Papen spoke of a *Mittel-Europa* under German leadership and many timid Austrians shouted "Heil Hitler!" and rushed to join the Nazis, just as their German brothers had done in the early days of 1933. The new Austrian Ministers and hangers-on, who had been appointed arising out of the Berchtesgaden meeting, flew backward and forward to Berlin and Munich. The Great Powers were silent, but their newspapers echoed the sentiment of their peoples—pity for little Austria and a hatred and loathing of aggression.

In Berlin on 20 February, Hitler met the assembled Reichstag and spoke of the pact of July 1936, but refrained from committing himself to a pledge to respect Austrian independence. Schuschnigg's last card was gone.

On the same evening, the district leaders of the National Socialist Party met in Berlin at a feast presided over by Rudolf Hess, ostensibly to celebrate the new events in Austria, and the speech he made left nothing to the imagination. "The Führer's genius has once again helped us out of an untenable position. Just as he rose to power when the Party was trembling on its foundations in 1933, and was able to obtain Hindenburg's support, so now, just at that moment when a military crisis was upon us, he has succeeded in bringing Schuschnigg to heel. Austria must be lined up, and this year too, for everything must be completed and ready by 1940, for the great day of reckoning."

While a few days later Field-Marshal Göring, speaking on the third anniversary of the new German Air Force, confirmed that the final step was close at hand. "... we shall become the terror of our enemies . . . and when the Führer, in his Reichstag speech, submitted his proud accounting and uttered the proud words that we would no longer tolerate that ten million German National comrades should be oppressed beyond the border, then you know, as soldiers of the Air Force, that if it must be, you must back these words of the Führer to the limit. . . ."

Von Papen's spiritual aide, Cardinal Innitzer, entered the lists and appealed for the liberation of Austria, and Seyss-Inquart, a practising Catholic and lover of classical

literature and music, who had gone to Berlin the very day after his appointment, proved himself to be one hundred per cent in favour of complete Germanization. During the latter part of February and the first few days of March all the upstarts in Vienna seemed to have fallen out. Deprived of his mentor, von Papen, Guido Schmidt incurred the displeasure of Hess and Göring for not stopping the Chancellor from making his fighting speech on 24 February, in which he called a halt to concession to Hitler's Reich, Göring going so far as to say: ". . . this little fellow of a Schmidt seems to be a bit of a traitor." Whether to Germany or Austria it is not quite clear.

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Quite apart from the various causes so far advanced, there was possibly a more important one that confirmed Hitler in his resolve to act quickly in 1938, and there were several solid reasons for his fearing it.

During the two years following the murder of Dollfuss, there had been growing strong Legitimist support for a restoration of Otto von Hapsburg, and the South German States, more particularly Bavaria, Baden and Württemberg, being still King-conscious and fretful at the Prussianism of the Third Reich, might easily have been led into a union with Catholic Austria, for they are born secessionists. Schuschnigg had often used the argument of a restoration and its far-reaching possibilities when dealing with the German Ambassador, and von Papen, to justify the delay in Vienna, had, in turn, on several occasions warned Hitler of it.

Now Hitler Germany was still going through certain stages of organic development and on occasion the administration was like a tight-rope-walker—an error of judgment and it could have come to grief. Apart from this a Monarchy in Austria would challenge by its glamour, whether successfully so or not it would not matter, Nazi hegemony in Europe, at the same time seriously retarding German economic revival, which was getting into full swing owing to the rearmament and public utility work in the Reich. It might even have destroyed the Nazi State and have

brought a revolution that in its horror and destruction would have surpassed any yet in European history.

Therefore the move in early 1938 was essential if von Papen's undermining of the Austrian political structure was to benefit the Reich.

After Schuschnigg's fighting speech which concluded "to the death . . . Austria!" a curious change came over Austrian life; those forces which Dollfuss had attempted to crush, the workers, rose in support of Schuschnigg and offered him physical assistance against any further German aggression. But it was too late, for the streets were ringing with cries of "Home to the Reich" and "Our Leader is coming". On 9 March the Federal Chancellor announced that he had decided upon holding a plebiscite to determine, once and for all, whether Austria should be free or dependent for ever upon Germany. "Friends, it is time to stand up for the German independence of Austria." Even now he could not forget that he was German.

The plebiscite was to be held on 13 March and two things happened in Europe on the same day which completed von Papen's handiwork in Austria more than the force of all the armies in the world. On the day after Schuschnigg had announced the plebiscite, the French Premier, M. Chautemps, resigned and Catholic France was without a Government, and on that day also a question was asked in the House of Commons if Britain would see to it that no foreign interference or pressure would be allowed in Austria leading up to and during the plebiscite—to which the British Prime Minister gave no reply.

The German Führer then knew that he could realize his cherished dream—Austria lay helpless at his feet. He prepared to occupy Austria on the grounds that the plebiscite was a breach of the "understanding" of February.

Seyss-Inquart and Glaise-Horstenau called on the Federal Chancellor and reproached him with a desire to unleash the German anger on Austria through the plebiscite—they followed their oral protestations by handing him a letter, which among other things stated the startling fact (for after all they were both Ministers of Austria, not of the Reich) that unless the plebiscite was cancelled, Hitler

would march. Furious, but dumbfounded, Schuschnigg rang up the German Embassy in the Metternich Strasse and asked to speak to his Excellency Herrn von Papen. The German envoy was not in Vienna, the Chargé d'Affaires, von Stein, answered, and in response to the Federal Chancellor's enquiry confirmed that the two Ministers' statements and letters were known and approved of by the German Government.

A few minutes later, Wilhelm Keppler, Economic adviser to Hitler and Reich Food Price Controller, arrived at the Aspern airport from Berlin and presented an ultimatum to both the Federal President, Miklas, and to Schuschnigg. The ultimatum demanded that the plebiscite was to be called off and Schuschnigg was to resign in favour of Dr. Seyss-Inquart or Germany would occupy Austria. The Military Attaché, General Muff, arrived almost immediately afterwards and repeated this ultimatum.

Miklas was for rejecting the ultimatum and meeting the invasion with force, but Schuschnigg agreed and resigned, to become a prisoner of Hitler in the manner of medieval times, except that nothing could effect his ransom.

Thus was Austria brought into the German Reich and Franz von Papen could safely say that this time he had not bungled. He had been given a mission to purge his earlier mistakes in the Reich of Wilhelm and in the Reich of Hitler, and he had succeeded.

Shortly after the occupation of Vienna by the German authorities, the body of Freiherr von Ketteler, the counsellor of Embassy who had acted as von Papen's personal aide during the pre-*Anschluss* days, and whose only crime was that he tried to remain a gentleman in spite of being in the service of the Third Reich, was picked up floating down the Danube. This time there was only one casualty in the von Papen entourage, but among those Austrians like Guido Schmidt and Seyss-Inquart there were political shipwrecks in plenty, for their utility had ceased. They made good conspirators and saboteurs, but the Reich apparently had no place for them as administrators. There is one code common to every land. You pay a spy but you do not respect him.

## CHAPTER XII

THE *Anschluss* brought about, Franz von Papen was now without purposeful employment, although he was still carried on the German Foreign Office List as Ambassador on special mission.

The Foreign Office was now under the control of Joachim von Ribbentrop, the business man who refrained from joining the Government of the Third Reich, although he had much to do in its making, until he was certain of its security of tenure. For several years he had been perambulating the capitals of Europe as a commercial traveller for Hitler's ideas, causing a great deal of annoyance to the official diplomatic representatives of the Reich.

The death of Dr. von Hoesch, head of the German Embassy in London, had created a vacancy to which von Ribbentrop was appointed over the heads of many diplomats of the old school.

Having behaved in London as if England was a German colony and making himself thoroughly objectionable in London society to all but a few, and they mostly of the *nouveaux riches*, he was glad when the purge of February 1938 gave Hitler an opportunity to recall him to Berlin, to take charge of the Foreign Office in the place of Freiherr von Neurath who had been removed for his cautious views.

In the Wilhelm Strasse Ribbentrop initiated his Anti-Comintern policy to which Italy, Japan and Hungary became willing subscribers.

Austria, safe in the arms of the so-called mother Reich (but of course history speaks another tale), Hitler voluntarily told the world that he had no more conquests in view; as for this gossip about Czechoslovakia—well! he had no need for Czechs in the Third Reich. The words were hardly spoken before the propaganda machine of the

Reich let loose a spate of accusations, followed up by claims, against the Czechoslovakian Republic and in common with the practice adopted since 1938, began to tell the world its history as seen through Nazi spectacles or what they call their *Weltanschauung*. Another back to the Reich campaign was started—the Sudetens had been torn from Germany by the cruel Treaty—they must return in peace and honour.

Now the true fact of the case is that the Sudetenland was never a part of Germany. The Bohemian kings had been also Electors of the Holy Roman Empire and in the time of Wenceslaus II (1278 to 1305) the crown of Bohemia owned most of what is now known as Poland, Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia, the Banat and Transylvania. Charles IV (1346 to 1371) reigned over Silesia, part of Bavaria and the Mark of Brandenburg. None of the North German Princes ever extended their domination into Bohemia, and the Sudetens had never been the subjects of Bavaria, Saxony or Prussia. From 1526, the Bohemian crown passed to the Hapsburgs, and until 1918, the people living in Bohemia were subjects of the Holy Roman Empire in its last rickety stages and later of the Dual Monarchy.

But notwithstanding the truth of history, there was none to call a halt on this purely academic score alone to the expansionist aims of Hitler, in which he was now abetted by Ribbentrop, who saw in a more powerful Germany a bludgeon against that England which he had come to hate and despise for its apparent decadence.

The Ribbentrop-Papen combination was soon to come into operation again, but meanwhile Austria was proving a rather indigestible meal. The leaders of the Third Reich, so capable of distorting history, had forgotten to read the words of the man who really gave them the chance to be great, if they could. Bismarck said: "Any German statesman who tried to annex Austria would be a fool and would suffer for it. The union of German Austria and Prussia would not work. Vienna is not to be governed from Berlin." Hitler will yet find the truth of the Iron Chancellor's words.

The German people were hoodwinked into believing all the stories about the "dwarfs in Prague, behind whom was

the eternal Jewish Bolshevist grimace of Moscow", and to applauding the German leader when he demanded the "return" of the Sudetenland to the Reich. That brought the world another step onwards in the war of nerves. With the bolts of war about to be hurled at the gates of Democracy, Neville Chamberlain bought peace for a few more months with the Pact of Munich, just another scrap of paper. That was September 1938.

By giving his pledged word, which the Prime Minister of England took at its face value, Hitler had won the Sudetenland; another victory in the bloodless war. With that the disintegration of Czechoslovakia was all but completed, requiring only a little more agitation to complete the destruction of the child of Versailles.

The decline of the Western Powers' influence in the East seemed complete when Germany threw aside all restraint and parcelled up what was left of the Republic of Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1939. Democratic politicians expressed themselves as being "shocked beyond measure" and in a vain attempt to call halt to the new Caesar, hurriedly undertook to guarantee the frontiers of Poland, Roumania and in fact any Power who liked to ask for it. It was a noble gesture, but the implications, both military and economic, of such commitments were known to but a few. It is one thing to give undertakings—quite another to implement them even if one has the will, because there still remains the science of geography as a factor in strategy.

The *Anschluss* and the rape of Czechoslovakia had caused considerable tension in the Baltic countries. When would the eagle eye from the Berghof greedily be turned to them across the Baltic?

Questions of social reform, model dairies and the timber trade ceased to be controversial for the Scandinavian peoples, and air-raid precautions, National defence and a joint stand in defence of all those ideals upon which the Northern Democracies prided themselves, enjoyed first place in debate and in the Press.

Professor Warburg, of the University of Copenhagen,

warned a meeting of undergraduates that "there is no one . . . who does not view the coming year with alarm. From the forge of Vulcan comes a deafening roar; the doors of the temple of Mars stand wide open and British Democracy is building ships as Athens did when the State was threatened by the authoritarian ruler of the Persians. The aeroplane had made the Channel as narrow as the Hellespont over which Xerxes threw a bridge". A few days later Herr Wigforss, Swedish Minister of Finance, when endeavouring to defend his budget for 1939-40 before the Economic Society in Stockholm, had all his argument swept away by Professor Hacksher, who declared "that it seemed to him that budgets hardly mattered any more. What really mattered was an understanding of the fact that European tradition itself, and all that their forefathers had achieved in two thousand years of struggle and sacrifice, was in jeopardy. He feared that Sweden would soon be faced with greater troubles than those which she faced during Napoleon's time."

In the early months of 1939, these speeches were typical of many, all of which voiced a universal feeling of fear that the long-cherished principle of absolute neutrality was about to disappear. The so-called Munich agreement had come as a shock to the Northern peoples, who felt that they could no longer rely upon Britain, who had apparently disposed of her interests in the business of European affairs.

Consequently there sprang up in parts of Scandinavia a strong tendency to lean towards the new German dynamism; it was felt that it was better to be friendly with, than openly to antagonize, the powerful Reich, which seemed to go from success to success.

The Scandinavians thought that they saw, in British reluctance to oppose with force the aggressive demands of Hitler, that same decadence of which the German Press spoke so loudly, and they shivered, seeming to see the shadow of the swastika reaching across to their coasts and forests. Critics of Britain arose who declared that she had surrendered, not only her leading place in Europe, but in the world. Spurred on by German propaganda, a



certain section said that Germany did not seek to fight Britain for world leadership—Britain was tired and the young and restless Reich would oblige the ancient race by taking the sceptre of power from her weakening grip and hold it in the young strong Aryan hand, bringing its “civilizing” culture to the world, thus fulfilling the mission of Prussia and the Reich.

The Scandinavian Press was not so easily scared in this regard and the insidious propaganda from Dr. Goebbels’ Ministry had difficulty in finding space in even the most remote town journal. What happened then was a sudden springing up of the whispering campaign, which had achieved some marked success in American commodity advertising. Reichs propaganda had become commercialized and in some instances raised to the level of the lecture-room. The German suddenly found a soft spot in his heart for his Aryan brother on the farther shores of the Baltic, to which Franz von Papen hastened in early 1939, complete with his usual tricks of the trade of underground diplomacy, on a mission to “remove understandings”.

The various raw materials of Sweden and the agricultural produce of the other Baltic States had not been lost sight of by the German Government. In an emergency, Germany had to have these States as benevolent neutrals willing to conduct trade, if they could not in the meantime be won as allies.

In Stockholm particularly, von Papen spoke to his audiences about the “real facts” of the *Anschluss* and hoped to remove any friction that might exist between Sweden and Germany. He spoke feelingly about the “wickedness of British balance-of-power policy” and waxed greatly wroth at “the ideological campaign waged by the Democracies against the Fascist States”. He invariably concluded his lectures by a colourful word picture of the Reich as a Christianizing influence and as a bulwark against the encroachment of Communism from the East.

The seed sown, the official diplomatic representatives of the Reich in every Scandinavian and Baltic capital suggested pacts of non-aggression and economic barter. under

which the Northern and Baltic currencies would be tied in a mark *bloc*, thus giving the otherwise valueless German currency an apparent outlet. But the hardheaded businessmen of the three main Northern States preferred to sell their goods for Sterling or Dollars or to Germany for Gold only.

As was shown in the Great War, the Northern countries are not anti-German, but they are anti-Nazi just as much as (while in many districts being Socialists) they abhor Communism. They are afraid of both Russia and Germany. The tour of von Papen, far from preparing the Baltic people for an understanding with the Reich, drove them all together into a common front, in a fixed determination not to be involved in any ideological struggle, but nevertheless prepared to fight against any foreign aggression upon their traditional neutrality.

"The maintenance of Swedish freedom and independence," said Hr. Sköld, the Swedish Minister of National Defence, a Socialist, in a speech in early spring, "is an interest common to all who live and work in this country. At the moment our common interests are greater than the things that divide us. The thought of aliens ruling over us and over the achievements created by the sweat and labour of our fathers is intolerable. Our blood turns cold at the thought that our children are to be compelled to speak a foreign tongue, and that the civilization created by the Swedish people during the course of centuries is doomed to disappear. In such circumstances arms are the last resort; we ourselves may have to die so that the Swedish people may live. If we look upon National defence in this light, then we may hope that it may prove a bulwark strong enough to frighten a potential aggressor and to save the peace."

That was as good an answer as any to von Papen's whisperings and invitations to come into the parlour of the Reich. He returned to Germany empty-handed, and to cover his discomfiture, the German official news agency announced that his visit to Sweden and other Scandinavian countries was purely one of an informative nature and had no official significance.

With Britain at last prepared to resist aggression and to support the rule of law against the threat of force in Europe, the German Government saw that it had been wrongly advised. Its adviser was von Ribbentrop. During his tortuous sojourn in England he had formed his own conclusions that England was decadent and would not fight to resist German expansion at the expense of other States. And he told Hitler so. Munich led Hitler to believe that his Foreign Minister was right, but the completion of Czechoslovakian destruction and the threat to Poland, which resulted in England offering aid to Poland and to all other countries who felt their security threatened by German policy, caused a rapid readjustment of his outlook on perfidious Albion.

Practically coincident with the opening of the talks with Russia which were intended to bring the Soviet into a peace front with France and Britain and to oppose with force any further attempted alteration of the frontiers of Europe, Franz von Papen was appointed, as the official notice ran, "on the proposal of Herrn von Ribbentrop," to be German Ambassador to Turkey.

This was on 18 April 1939 and talks had already begun between a British delegation and the Turkish Government, whereby it was hoped that Turkey would find her way into the new Grand Alliance which was to oppose with blood and treasure the power-drunk missionary of a new German world mission.

Papen and Ribbentrop had put their heads together again and were resolved to stop at nothing to prevent a hardening of the attitude of the Western Democracies.

In England political exigency had made war on reason and the pressure of events, coupled with an equally strong pressure from the British working-class movement, had caused a Conservative British Government, against its better judgment and natural dislike of a régime alien to its upbringing, to seek the friendship of a Russia whose hands were smeared with the blood of millions of its own populace and whose pockets were gorged with the assets of British traders who had been expropriated during the revolution of 1917.

This friendship was not sought on Britain's behalf alone—it was an Anglo-French move to assist the two countries to implement their pledge, so rashly given, to defend the integrity of Poland, which had, a month or two before, received at Germany's hands the territory of Teschen.

Why had the policy of Colonel Josef Beck changed from a pro-German policy? He was known to every diplomat and foreign observer as a Germanophile and it was further known that he hated the Russians. He had been party to the persecution of Jews and agrarian parties inside Poland and every step of his policy was moulded on Nazi lines.

He had changed his mind because he was frightened at the adventures into which he saw his close association with Germany would lead him, and which in the end would only bring about another partition of Poland. Now Colonel Beck has proved that he is a brave man and, judged by the usual standards, a patriot; but all super-patriots, it will be noticed, invariably land the plums of high office or suffer bitter pain and degradation.

The reports of his intelligence service told him that by rowing on with Germany, he would ultimately become a Schuschnigg. He was faced with only one alternative to that fate; his class Government had to go and his country must become more democratized, and as England was just then throwing away offers of support to all and sundry, he thought with such support and a little hard cash, he could stand up to Hitler and remain in power in an independent Poland.

So the pact with Poland was agreed upon, accompanied by the usual pocket-money England has always had to give on such occasions. England did not stop to enquire too closely into the morals of this change of front of Poland—it had also forgotten the severe inconvenience its section of the plebiscite commission had suffered in Silesia at the hands of a certain Korfanty; but that was a long time ago, as were also Mr. Lloyd George's remarks at the Peace Conference.

During the time Colonel Beck was negotiating the general principles of the Anglo-Polish pact in London, I came into

possession of certain information which I assume also reached official hands in England, and which doubtless caused Franco-British policy to seek the aid of Russia against the expressed desire of the Polish Government, which was being pressed to accept as an ally a country of whom it had greater fear than Germany.

During the last week in March the German Army, Air Force and Navy chiefs had been ordered to bring about instant and simultaneous mobilization against snap orders from Hitler, as supreme commander, thereby to enforce an immediate issue, before the Democracies had time to organize their peace front or Grand Alliance. The intention then was to:—

- a. Occupy the Polish corridor by means of an attack:
  1. From West Prussia.
  2. From East Prussia, thus bringing the territory between a pair of pincers.
- b. Double the defences of the Siegfried Line against a potential French offensive, which might come arising out of purely Franco-Polish agreements made years before.
- c. Fight purely defensive actions on other Polish fronts and repulse possible sympathetic attacks through Rumania.
- d. Pursue a ruthless submarine and air offensive against England, in the Mediterranean and against the coast of Tunis.
- e. Prepare a Western offensive against England by sea and air, even, if need be, to occupying Holland (*n.b. this method is recommended in all German military manuals: Author*).
- f. Prior to the foregoing measures, the complete evacuation into Germany of all the German population in the Corridor, numbering some 280,000 souls (*not the number of millions claimed by the race enthusiasts of the Reich, Author*).

On 1 April 1939, the military measures were temporarily countermanded, for another plan had been introduced, which while less spectacular, was less bloody, and it was hoped that the end could be achieved without resort to war—merely by the threat of a terrific combination.

The evacuation of the Corridor population nevertheless was ordered to be carried out, cloaked by atrocity stories from German Nationals living in Thorn, Posen, Kulm and Bromberg.

Turkey and Russia were to be the two keys with which Germany was to open the Polish Corridor. While the British Delegation was still negotiating with the Turkish Government, von Papen made overtures to the Turkish Foreign Minister for a pact of non-aggression which would ensure the neutrality of Turkey in the event of a conflict between Germany and the Western Powers. Notwithstanding the fact that Turkey was already on good terms with Russia, von Papen's suggestions must nevertheless have shocked the Turk, for they carried the implication of treachery to an ally and a complete turnabout in German ideological orientation.

The agreement proposed in the first rough draft ran along the following lines:—

1. Germany undertook to compel Bulgaria to make frontier revision in favour of Turkey, thereby giving Turkey a greater territory in Europe.
2. Germany and Turkey to agree never to go to war with each other and/or as allies of Powers at war with either of them.
3. Russia to be given a free hand in the Far East to combat Japanese military and economic penetration in China.
4. The Balkans to be divided into German and Russian spheres of influence. The German sphere to include Hungary, Rumania, Jugo-slavia and Greece, while the Russian sphere would embrace Bulgaria and Turkey.
5. Russia to be given the Baltic States as a recognized sphere of influence.
6. Poland to be partitioned between Germany and Russia, the Soviets regaining the Polish Ukraine and acquiring Wilna.
7. Russia to acquire Bessarabia, ceded to Rumania after the great war.

This plan was the first fruits of the Ribbentrop-Papen combination, and it will be at once remarked that in one sweep Hitler betrayed his own doctrines and his friends, for his contemplated consorting with Russia destroyed the basis of his own statements in *Mein Kampf*, where he says that the present rulers of Russia are blood-stained criminals and that those in power in Russia to-day have no idea of forming honourable alliances or remaining true to them,

if they did—and concludes his hymn of hate: “the fact of (Germany) forming an alliance with Russia would be the signal for a new war. And the result of that would be the end of Germany”; while it destroyed the Anti-Comintern Pact, which his henchman Ribbentrop devised, and showed an intention to “stab in the back” (of which he so frequently complains) his avowed friends, Italy and Japan.

The Turkish Government politely turned down the German proposal and completed its negotiations with Britain. But the smiling Herr von Papen was not dismayed; he had experienced set-backs like these before.

He called upon the Russian Ambassador to Turkey, M. Tjergentjev, and made several suggestions to him, for the supreme council of the Soviets to turn over in its mind. This was in late April; and during May, when passing through Bucharest *en route* to Berlin, he told newspaper men that he yet had hopes of Turkey coming into the German orbit.

Immediately following upon von Papen's return to Berlin, a great deal of activity took place between the Italian and Russian Embassies, which at the time was not specially commented upon, because everyone knew that Italy and Russia were on friendly terms, despite the former's adherence to the Anti-Comintern Pact, which apparently did not prevent it from building warships for the new Soviet Navy.

Signor Attolico called several times on M. Merekaeloff, not to discuss Italo-Russian affairs, but as a mutual friend of Germany, which sought to enlarge the pact, which the Russian Ambassador would remember was confirmed by Chancellor Hitler as one of his first official acts in 1933, made between Russia and Germany by the early régime of the German Republic. Signor Attolico also politely hinted that it was high time, in face of the coming onslaught of the Capitalist countries, that Russia and Germany should return to their old traditional friendship.

In early June, the Russian Ambassador called upon Signor Attolico and intimated that M. Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Commissar (who at the moment was busy enter-

taining a crowd of bourgeois Englishmen and Frenchmen), was quite willing to receive the German suggestions.

In the manner known to diplomacy, this news ultimately reached the German Government and von Papen was missing from his usual haunts. He was not to be found on his estates, nor in his Embassy in Angora, neither was he in Berlin. He was in Moscow, whither he had gone, despite the usual official denials to the contrary, to lay before the Russian Government the German plan for a full alliance, including a Commercial Treaty carrying substantial German credits in the best Western tradition.

So Franz von Papen, while still dreaming of his Holy Empire of Western Germans, entered the house of the godless, making his sufficiently low obeisance, doubtless crossing himself for his perfidy, and laid his plans before Molotov, the successor to M. Litvinoff, whom he had often reviled.

The main points of the Treaty proposed by von Papen were:—

1. Reaffirmation of the Treaty of 1926.
2. Mutual guarantee of the independence of all States (*if any: Author*) lying between the two countries, after the Polish question had been settled.
3. Renunciation by Hitler of all ambitions in the Ukraine.
4. A public joint undertaking that the Anti-Comintern Pact is directed only against Communist agitation and propaganda and is in no way directed against the Soviet Union.
5. Unconditional pledge by each of non-interference in the internal affairs of the other.
6. A Commercial Treaty.

It will be seen that such a Treaty in the hands of politicians like Hitler and Stalin meant virtually an understanding to effect another partition of Poland. Hitler and Stalin hoped to say with Napoleon and Alexander: "We are Europe!"

Weeks went by and the British and French delegations in Moscow found themselves cooling their heels on the metaphorical doorstep of the Kremlin. While they waited, the Russian experts wrangled (and wangled) with the



knotty problems of the German proposals, leaving the British Prime Minister, without weapons, the butt of attacks in Parliament. Britain was blamed for the delay in reaching final agreement on the terms of the Anglo-Franco-Soviet Pact to preserve Poland from just that fate which Germany and Russia were hoping to prepare for her.

Mr. Neville Chamberlain stated on several occasions that as far as Britain was concerned, no ideological differences were proving obstacles to the smooth treatment of the negotiations. Yet no indication came from Moscow that agreement was in sight. Towards the end of July, with the Russo-German terms practically agreed, the Soviet put forward its final terms to Poland and the Western Powers. As the Soviet put it, the only real way in which Russia could be of assistance to Poland was for Poland and her present allies to agree to Russian occupation of the Polish provinces of Wilna and Volhynia directly on the outbreak of hostilities.

Two reasons, both cunning, were behind the minds of the Russian schemers when putting forward this suggestion. The first was that Russia was fairly sure that Poland would not agree to such a condition, with memories of past Russian treachery and butchery still in the Polish people's minds, and therefore Russia could call off the negotiations on the somewhat slender grounds that Poland was not serious in her intentions for an understanding, thus leaving the way clear to sign up with Germany; if, on the other hand, out of dire necessity and against her better judgement, Poland agreed to the Russian proposal, the partition of Poland, so far as the Russian slice was concerned, was brought about without Soviet participation in a war, because it is fairly safe to assume that once the Red Army had occupied the two provinces in question, they would not leave them, but would set up peasant and workers' councils on the Russian model.

Now what accounted for the Hitler change of front? Not a sudden conversion to the creed of Stalin. And why was not Herr von Papen set down by the first refusal of Turkey to listen to his scheme?

In the new attitude of England and France Hitler saw a serious threat of war in opposition to his further expansion. Therefore, knowing that Germany could not sustain for long a war on both East and West fronts, on the advice of his military chiefs (who in any case had a pretty sound respect for the Russian Army, which was only natural, since many high Reichswehr officers had trained it in the past) he seized upon the Ribbentrop-Papen plan to secure his Eastern frontiers, hoping that after a pact was concluded and signed with Russia, the Western Powers would fall away from their guarantee to Poland. If he could win the Soviet over to his plan he would achieve a tremendous diplomatic success, thus frightening Europe into respectful agreement in regard to his intentions in Danzig, the Corridor, Hungary and Yugoslavia.

Von Papen was not disheartened over his apparent failure in Turkey, because he felt that with Russia on Germany's side Turkey would at least become neutral, if not enter the German camp through the mutual understanding with Russia, and thus a waterway to Germany would be kept open through the Dardanelles and Black Sea, via either Russian ports or up the Danube to various German towns.

Hitler on his part intends to keep to his own bible—he intends ultimately to gain the rich lands of the Ukraine and to make Germany (the phantom or perhaps the reason of his sleepless nights) lord of Russia, supreme overlord in Europe and master of the world. Several men in Europe have suffered from the same disease. Once Germany could again have a frontier which marched with Russia's, Hitler felt convinced that the Nazi ideology would prove stronger than the Communist idea and that Nazi-ism could penetrate into the vast distances of white Russia and beyond—the hammer and sickle falling before the white race of arya—the chosen.

Stalin responded favourably to the German suggestion for a pact, because he saw in closer relationship with Germany a heaven-sent opportunity to regain contact with the huge Socialist mass in the Reich, and by infiltration reawaken the hopes of Communism which were nipped in

the bud in 1932—and through that the spread of world revolution would become easier.

We thus have a fairly accurate picture of two rival ideologies, which until the Papen-suggested *rapprochement* tore each other to pieces, now each professing friendship with the other, groping for a way by which the one could overcome the other—with a Christian Conservative nobieman playing the part of Archangel.

The English and French delegations in Moscow seemed unable to arrive at any mutually satisfactory formula; every week the Press of the world carried the usual story that everything had been settled in principle and that it now required only a little touch here and there to what would become a final document, the existence of which would ensure permanent world peace.

Soviet spokesmen named Germany as an aggressor Nation and the supreme head of the Russian Army publicly declared that if German aggression continued the Nazis would have to walk carefully, for the "honest Soviet soldier was itching to come to grips with the German Army". This was in July and the Democracies breathed more freely, because the peace *bloc* seemed so complete that it could even afford to go to war, conscious of its superiority in men, money and materials.

At the beginning of August, England and France sent military, naval and air force missions to Moscow and the world saw in that move something more than pacts—the Nations thought that they saw action at last. The newsreels and picture newspapers of the world carried the mirrored vision of English and French officers of high rank hobnobbing with the proletarian commissars of Russia's millions—the world marvelled, but it kept on breathing. Yet still no word came of accord on the pact. No initialling and no breakdown of the conversations.

. . . . .

Then on 20 August 1939 something happened to change European history and the contents of the final pages of this book. A *communiqué* was issued in Berlin announcing that a commercial treaty had been signed between Russia

and the Reich, whereby Russia undertook to supply Germany with raw materials to be paid for by the barter of German manufactured goods to the value of 180,000,000 Marks. This announcement smashed the myth of Russian intensified industrialism and threw a handful of Wagner's harmonious discords (so dear to the ear of Herr Hitler) right into the European arena.

If that was not enough to shake the slumbering diplomats, the next day brought far more staggering news. The *Tass Agency* and the *Deutsche Nachrichten Büro* both issued the following notice:—

“The German Government and the Soviet Government have come to an understanding with regard to the conclusion of a non-aggression pact. The German Foreign Minister, Herr von Ribbentrop, will arrive in Moscow on Wednesday (23 August 1939) to bring the negotiations to a conclusion.”

The Ribbentrop-Papen combination had worked well, for this announcement was made directly consequent upon Franz von Papen's return from his much-denied secret mission to Moscow, and immediately after he, von Ribbentrop and Hitler had been in conference at Berchtesgaden. Despite the *volie-face* in Moscow the Staff talks between the Russian, French and British officers continued. But again a German move miscarried.

Papen, Ribbentrop and Hitler had thought that the mere announcement of the German-Soviet Pact would scare the British and French away from continuing to undertake assistance to Poland. They had judged the Western Powers by their own measures. The British answer to the pact came from a Cabinet meeting on 22 August, in a notice reiterating Britain's intention to go to the aid of Poland and to implement that undertaking to the uttermost.

On 23 August, von Ribbentrop, who had flown to Moscow with a pretentious retinue in a miniature air armada, and Molotov, the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, representing their respective countries, signed the German-Soviet pact of non-aggression. The pact was to all intents and purposes the same as the rough draft sub-

mitted by von Papen to the Russian Ambassador in Turkey some months earlier, when idling on the waters of the Bosphorus.

The German people were astounded. The "Jewish Bolshevik menace from Moscow", which they had been taught to hate and for which thousands of mothers, wives and sweethearts had lost their dear-ones in Spain in order to protect the poor innocent Spaniards from the scourge of the "priest-slaughtering Communists", had disappeared overnight.

Von Ribbentrop's leer was pictured side by side with the grin of satisfaction of Molotov, and looked out from the pages of the newspapers to a bewildered world. The mask was thrown aside—von Ribbentrop, the creator of the Anti-Comintern Pact, was fêted by those Russians whom he had previously sought to destroy. Hitler, with his split mind, had betrayed all those in the Nazi Party, and indeed the whole of the German people, to whom he had fed the lie of his anti-Communism. The Japanese, Italians and Spaniards, who in July were seemingly prepared to fight as allies of Germany in a world crusade against Communism, were now disillusioned and converted into neutrals, if not enemies, in any coming conflict. As for von Papen, he had performed his last betrayal, for he could not hope to rise in a Russian-German combination to the headship of any Empire of Western Germans, much less a holy one.

As I write England and France find themselves in a state of war with Germany, following upon a brutal and unprovoked attack on Poland—that same Poland to whom Hitler personally has professed friendship in three public speeches since September 1938. Now the German Army is seeking to recover by force, among other things that same Duchy of Teschen which Poland took so light-heartedly on Hitler's invitation after the rape of Czechoslovakia.

The Democracies now find themselves at war, not with the German people but with the men who stand for Nazi world-domination and the destruction of the rule of inter-

national law among the Nations. Britain fights, as much to save the German people from the domination of Hitlerism as to be faithful to a promise and to maintain the British tradition.

And who is responsible for the holocaust in which Europe will shortly find herself?

Franz von Papen, Westphalian nobleman, German officer and Papal Chamberlain, aided and abetted by the present occupant of the Holy See, for without Papen there would have been no Hitler; without help from the Vatican Hitler could not have stood in office in Germany for a year. Von Papen handed Hitler power on a platter when the Nazi Party was broken and discredited, when it could not win another election on its own merit—von Papen won Austria for the Reich of Hitler by his intrigue—von Papen worked the Concordat, which stole the souls and the political power of German Catholics.

Cardinal Pacelli who had been unable during earlier régimes to bring about understanding between the Reich and the Vatican, was able to assist von Papen to do so for a Hitler, whom he knew to be insincere in his publicly-stated desire to combat Communism and who, even during the negotiations for the Concordat, passed laws provided for a thing most heinous to the Catholic mind and tenets—sterilization.

Why did Pacelli keep silent? Because in von Papen's plan for a Holy Roman Empire of Western Germans he saw in the future a stronger Catholic Church, with the Vatican back again in the seat of temporal power, and the destruction of the Church of Luther in Northern Europe. That same Pacelli is now wielding the power of spiritual dictatorship over millions of souls, yet scarcely a whisper was raised at Hitlerian aggression and persecution. Step by step, he has allowed the simple, hard-working German people, blinded by their adulation of the self-appointed Messiah, to enslave themselves to the power-drunk maniac, who would be certified as insane by any mental board, and thus to encompass their own destruction.

As I write these lines three days of slaughter have passed and not a prayer has come from the Vatican for the souls

of the contestants, quite half of whom are Catholic. Terrible will be the reckoning when these men, stripped of all their earthly influences, stand before their God, Who will ask for an accounting. What can be their excuse? Nothing!

Franz von Papen has pursued a premeditated bloody path from the moment he set foot in America in 1914. The others have been party to his later doings, but his is a life of crime against society, carried on under the guise of religion and patriotism.

The dead in the American munition factories and merchant ships did not meet their end in the hot blood of battle, but through the machinations of a master schemer. The same applies to all those spies, great and small, who were imprisoned or shot as a result of his carelessness. His colleagues who were killed in the 1934 purge met their fate through his evil association, while the 1,000 members of the Nazi Party who were executed on 25 August 1939 in a purge directed against that section of German life which protested against the pact with Russia, can be considered as nothing other than a sacrifice to his grand plan.

Without Franz von Papen, Adolf Hitler would have had to revert to house-painting or the home for destitute men in which he lived for so long before the war of 1914 gave him employment and food. While history may say that Hitler has been responsible for the enslavement and ultimate destruction of millions of Germans in a fate worse than any yet equalled in history, it must also say that it was von Papen who lured them to Hitler's Third Reich, in the mistaken idea that it would prove to be the forerunner of his own Reich of the Germans.

While appearing to be in opposition, these two men, by their very conflict of ideas, have dug the pit deeper into which the German Nation has been thrown. The dead and maimed of the present war will be on the head of von Papen as much as on Hitler's.

It may be that the present emergency or crisis will save the world from worse things, for without Franco-British halting of aggression and the meeting of force with force, Nazi domination of Europe would have been complete within ten years. Perhaps there is something in this word

crisis—derived from the Greek *krisis*, meaning judgement—for our present order stands at the bar of judgement.

The history of Franz von Papen and the situation in which his final exploit has placed Europe, is a warning to us in Democratic lands that the old order of vested interests and the personal rule of the few is fighting in its last trench. It is a warning that a new order is pending and we must adjust ourselves to meet what will become a challenge from a coalition between the old, and the revolutionary new, ideologies.

Conditions must change, but we must see to it that the change is brought about in a manner to our liking and by our own shaping, and one which will benefit the whole community of Nations.

A new world order is almost upon us, in which humanity, unless watch is kept, will not differ much from the Wellsian conception of regimented and uniformed slaves. To combat this approaching doom of individualism, we must listen to the voices of reason and conscience, decency and culture and not be led astray by false gods or the specious promises of Fascism or Communism, however much these two factions may disguise their purpose in the Anglo-Saxon world.

THE END